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A Book Concerning the Provision Made of God for a Life in Common between Himself and Man

BY

WILLIAM B. CLARKE

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
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TO

MY DAUGHTERS

IN RECOGNITION OF THE AID THEY HAVE GIVEN ME
BY THEIR SYMPATHY

PREFACE

THE subject discussed in this book is, in general, communion with God. It is, however, studied in a portion only of its forms, and in close connection with the development of the special historic series of events which Christians believe to have been divinely instituted to secure that communion for us.

The guiding thought of the book is that communion is strictly what the word by its derivation signifies—a life in common between souls. Communion with God, therefore, is a life in common between a soul and God, each entering with an intelligent love and sympathy into the other's mind and thoughts. As our theme unfolds, and especially in the study of our Lord's death, increasing emphasis is laid on the second and, as the writer thinks, less understood part in this communion—our sympathy with God in his thoughts.

Inasmuch as historical facts, and documents whose authenticity is generally acknowledged, alone need to be employed in the study lying before us, what is called the higher criticism does not much concern us, and will be but little considered.

Especial pains has been taken to lift the truths of the Christian system, as far as possible, out of the sphere of the unnatural, or what may be called the thaumaturgic sphere, into the sphere of the natural, or, if I may so modify that term, of the larger natural. For the writer accounts it the supreme value of the bible that it reveals to us this larger, or, in the truest sense, super natural, rather than the merely finite or human natural.

It need only be added that the writer counts the following as the two greatest benefits he has himself received from his studies. First, his strengthened faith in the bible, as a true record of the great Father's special revelation to man of his spiritual truths, and a record divinely fitted to our need. Second, his clearer apprehension of the death of Christ as the disclosure of God's very highest thoughts toward us—thoughts wherein the wonderful perfection of his sympathy with us is attended by a power to draw human hearts out into sympathy with him, which even the full strength of our ignorance and sin will in the end be unable to resist.

W. B. C.

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I

FAITH-KNOWLEDGE

THE subject treated in this book lies in the domain of faith. The book, therefore, is an appeal to man in the totality of his powers; for this is the characteristic of faith as distinguished from the other operations of the human mind. It is especially the feature that distinguishes faith-knowledge from the only other kind of knowledge, science-knowledge. The difference between these two may be called world-wide, so utterly diverse are they in the mental activities they involve and the spheres to which they introduce us. And yet, diverse as they are, we are perfectly and equally familiar with both these kinds of knowledge, and pass every day from one to the other without a thought of the difference. Thus a great part of each day's life consists of facts given us in perception and consciousness. We meet a friend, we are conscious of a thought, or experience an emotion. When the mind carefully reports such facts as these they are known

absolutely, and are properly classed as coming under the head of science-knowledge. Such familiar truths as that a stone left unsupported falls to the ground, or the sun rises every morning at an hour that can be exactly determined beforehand, it is well known, fall under the same head. We have to do, on the other hand, constantly, and in matters of the utmost importance, with faith-knowledge. Most of the things essential to our welfare, such as the friends we love, the truths we cherish, and the higher ends to which we devote ourselves, are embraced by us in faith- not science-knowledge.

What, then, is the vital distinction between these two? It lies in a peculiar fact, namely, that science-knowledge, save that it has its ultimate basis in cognitions whose origin is in dispute, rests entirely on intellectual processes. It may be said of science-knowledge, that it approaches perfection according as it is uninfluenced by any admixture whatever of feeling or will. Has feeling any place in the mind's acceptance of the truth of gravitation? It is a pure production of the intellect, and nothing else would so quickly and completely discredit it as the discovery that it had come to rest largely on feeling or on will for its support.

Faith-knowledge, on the other hand, can

have no existence save on the condition that the three faculties, intellect, feeling, and will, unite to produce it. Nor is the mere operation of these faculties enough, their clear assent is necessary. It is of the very nature of faith to be affirmative. To speak of faith in the denial of anything would be evidently absurd; negations are not subject-matter of faith. We may test the truth of the general statement here made by supposing the absence of the affirmative testimony of either of these elements. What will become of faith if we suppose the consent of the intellect to be wanting? You may have a weak compliance more negative than positive in its character; you may have a blind superstition; you may have the wild rage of the fanatic, or the stolid persistence of the bigot. Neither of these is faith. A sincere action of the intellect and its honest assent are indispensable to faith. This of course does not require the existence of superior intelligence or of a high intellectuality. A small intellect, used honestly in freedom from selfish motive, may impart to the faith of the simple-hearted an instinctive perception of truth and a peculiarly beautiful love of it. This, in high or low, is that assent of the intellect which genuine faith requires; and its importance is such as to render it proper to

call the intellect an equal factor with the other powers which enter into faith's production.

This is saying much, for the need of feeling in order to faith is conspicuous. The question is a simple one. The word faith answers to one of the most familiar of our mental states. It is by the faith which men have, in religion, in government and the institutions of society, in principles of truth, in the honor of business men, in the good feeling of neighbors and friends, in their homes, in themselves, that the world moves on. But these are all matters in which the feelings of men are deeply interested. So important, indeed, is it to rightly estimate the place of feeling in our faith-knowledge that I may properly specify a few particulars concerning it.

1. Consider that there can in the nature of things be no motive to action that does not consist of some feeling; nor can there be any end sought by the soul of man that does not lie purely in the realm of feeling; nor, in fact, can life have any ultimate value save in the feelings that are awakened and satisfied in the process of it. The *Principia* of Newton was a purely intellectual work. The fact, however, remains that it would never have been written save as the thinker was compelled thereto, and animated, as the work progressed, by many feel-

ings—his joy in the doing of such work; his consciousness of the increase in reputation and power it would bring him; his feeling of the benefits which such an advance in knowledge would confer on the race; the force of acquired habit itself, the habit, namely, of intellectual effort, and the satisfaction found in gratifying it.

2. The gradation in the nature of our feelings, and the superior value of some as compared with others is also a fact of evident and familiar importance. Life is enriched by exalted affections; it becomes to its possessor a thing of more exquisite value. The intelligent citizen and father blessed in his family, has this advantage over the tramp.

3. Equally certain is the constantly increasing possession by the race of the better feelings in the progress of its development. This is by a natural law. It is one of many laws controlling our human development. The revelation made in scripture is in aid of it.

4. A fourth consideration of great significance is the fact that various ones among our feelings have a marked evidential value. They are self-evident, and therefore of their very nature command the assent of the reason. It is in the realm of right that this especially holds. Our apprehension of the obligation over us of that which we recognize as right is

intuitive. It is complete in itself and independent of intellectual processes. So clear is this that Herbert Spencer, holding the utilitarian theory of right, acknowledges it. He affirms that our sense of right is intuitive, though he holds that this results from a vast experience by our race of the fact that certain classes of acts tend to produce happiness, and others the contrary. The alternative explanation of this fact is that the unfolding of the moral order in this world was so shaped by its author as to be in harmony with the already existing order in the universe at large. This is a supposition that clears away all the difficulties. Mr. Spencer himself admits "a naturally revealed end" —natural evidently in distinction from supernatural—"toward which the power manifested in evolution works."[1] In admitting this he has already advanced beyond the steps of principal difficulty in his approach to the theistic faith.

Christianity affords a striking instance of that union of the intellect and feelings which we have found essential to a true act of faith. Two views of the nature of faith may be said to divide the Christian world. According to both, faith is the yielding up of the spirit in loyalty to Christ. But the one sees in it chiefly the yielding up of the intellect in belief; while

[1] *Data of Ethics*, cheap edition, Appleton & Co., p. 171.

the other regards it as chiefly the surrender of the heart in trust and love. The difference is not a dangerous one, nor the question important which view has the more of truth. They are both true, and the more clearly we can see the truth of each the better.

No fact in the world's history has shone out more conspicuously than the power which faiths, true and false, have had to change the life of mankind. The will is the seat of power in the human mind, and its activity in faith is the secret of this power so often manifested. It will repay us if we take a little pains to apprehend the scope of this truth. We need first of all to take into account the peculiarity of faith-knowledge that by its very nature it admits of doubt. It is only science-knowledge when wrought to positive results that is free from the possibility of doubt. It may be said truly of any article of faith-knowledge, that if it were to become free from all possibility of doubt it would cease to be faith-knowledge and become science-knowledge. While faith-knowledge admits thus necessarily of doubt it is also true, and the fact is very noticeable, that the mind's certitude, or feeling of certainty, in many matters of faith-knowledge is far greater than in most matters of science-knowledge.

It is a matter of science-knowledge that the rising of the sun is caused by the earth's turning on its axis. Nobody doubts this. Everybody acknowledges it to be a fact proved by science and of unquestionable certainty. But in this and in a multitude of similar cases, our feeling of that certainty is not to be compared with faith's absolute assurance of things which are unquestionably liable to doubt, such as the integrity of a trusted friend, or the ultimate victory of a rightful cause. How, then, does the mind attain to that clear and firm conviction that in many instances gives so noble a strength to faith? It is by the employment of the will to strengthen both the consent of the intellect and that of the heart. The office of the will is twofold: first, to decide between conflicting claims upon reason and feeling; and, second, to confirm the strength of a conviction when made. Such terms as will-power or strength of character imply an energetic action of the will in both these forms. This is the power by which men settle a matter and it stays settled. It invests a spirit with a great nobleness. When we speak of a mighty faith, it is this in it chiefly which makes it mighty. There is often no higher test of manhood than that one be able to use an effective will-power for the establishment of his faith; it may be

his faith in himself or in the work to which he devotes himself; it may be his faith in another; it is frequently his faith in a great truth; it may be his faith in the Father and the Son.

It is evident that the word faith has a peculiarly intimate relation to the moral sphere of life. The word is most at home here; it is fully at home nowhere outside this sphere.

The reason of this must be sought in the fact that faith is a mental act involving the totality of the human powers, involving especially the three fundamental powers of thought, feeling, and the will. Now in the realm of feeling the moral affections hold the highest place, a place, indeed, so much the highest that they stand entirely by themselves. I assume this as a first truth and recognized as such in the developed consciousness of mankind. If this be true, there can be no assent of the entire powers of the soul in a case where right moral action is excluded. There can be no faith, in the highest sense of the word, in things neutral as regards their moral quality. Still less can there be faith in things evil. By failing to apprehend this truth some thinkers have gone wide of the mark. The true and the beautiful are plainly distinguishable from the good, but they are in the very closest relation to it. A pure devotion to either of these has in it ele-

ments of a noble faith. The question whether there can be faith in these in the highest sense of the word is the question whether they can command to the highest possible extent the human powers. The Christian believes that only goodness can do this; and that mere abstract goodness even cannot do it, but only the great Being who is the source of all—the true, the beautiful, the good itself included.

It is to be conceded that the word faith is used not improperly in a multitude of cases that fall below this standard; but this is by a species of accommodation, not in the full meaning of the word. Thus a rider may have faith in his good horse, or an engineer in his good machine; but this is by imputing to the object of the faith the moral quality of faithfulness. It is, on the other hand, an anomaly, and an abuse of terms, to speak of faith in the almighty dollar, or faith in an ordinary political machine. No man ever bestowed the real consent of his entire nature upon anything so sordid as these; or if he did, this in itself was sufficient proof that he had ceased to be possessed of the totality of powers that combine to make a man. A single question fairly answered should be decisive upon this whole matter: What have been the great faiths of humanity? Do any deserve that name in

which the very greatest moral interests have not been involved? Even the Greek love of beauty, however pure, must be shut out of this list. Let her love of liberty be admitted; let her love and pursuit of truth, intellectual and spiritual, count among the greatest: true faiths both of these.

The world is mainly divided to-day between two theories of the universe, briefly termed the agnostic and the theistic. It is claimed by believers in the former theory that it possesses the great advantage of being based on positive or scientific knowledge. The supporters of the other rejoice that its foundations are securely laid in faith-knowledge. Each begins in the observation of facts: the one primarily, and thus far chiefly, of the facts of the natural world, and yet of these as leading on to the knowledge of the universe as a whole; the other primarily of the facts of the soul, as leading on to the knowledge of the universe and of him who made it. For the better understanding of the discussion which follows it will be proper that a few words be said here as to the position held by the author regarding these two theories.

In what of knowledge of the universe science is able to affirm, science is wholly right and beneficent; a mighty source of light sending

its rays into every realm of thought; a thing born of God, product of his plans for the good of his creatures; a fountain of blessing; a glorious object for our faith to accept.

The fault of science when it assumes to be a theory of the universe, is not in its affirmations, but in its denials. We accept thankfully the former; we reject as unscientific and as unworthy of our acceptance the latter. What shall be said, for instance, of a theory that affirms the existence of a first cause, for the reason substantially that the nature of man demands it, but shuts out entirely the supposition that the author of the universe can be an intelligent being and capable of choice—that is, that he can be like unto ourselves, the highest of his creatures and the beings nighest to their source, and this upon the purely metaphysical ground that ultimate being, whether matter or spirit, is unknowable by us? May we then not even raise the question whether the facts of our nature indicate that God may be a being who can have a thought for his creatures and a plan for us; who can regard us with love, and whom we can love and reverence in return?

It is the fatal defect of the science theory of the universe, as distinguished from the faith theory, that it so narrows the life in the higher and broader spheres of our being. In all the

lower rounds, heart and will have their free scope. What there is of charm in our life and what of nobleness springs from them. The intellect itself is but their servant, its office being plainly to broaden and enrich the sphere of their glorious activities. It is, in a word, a faith world that we live in, and outside of that fact it has no value for us. Love, joy, pure aspiration, loftiness of choice and of endeavor, goodness and trust in goodness, the mighty hopes, the mighty strifes, the vast achievements "that make us men,"—all turn on this characteristic feature of our condition. But when we rise to the larger thought of the created universe, and our relation to it and its source, and the ultimate ends of our own being, all this is shut away from us. We long to love, but in this highest realm it is forbidden. Our feeling would gladly rise in thankfulness for all we have and enjoy, and in worship of the great source of all; there is nothing for us but to put down this feeling. Our longing is great to serve the right, and get the approval of the Lord of the righteous kingdom; but there is no right in this sense and no such righteous Lord. Our needs send us to the throne of the Almighty for sympathy and help. It is vain, there is no such thing as a heart of God to sympathize; nor a will that could bend

that heart, if there were one, to our help. Thus in the highest realm the highest in us has no place; nor in the largest realm has the largest in us any room for its activity. Our servant, that intellect with which we find ourselves furnished for our use, becomes our master, shutting us out of our realm; while the true masters, mighty heart and will, become its slaves. We Christians do not believe, we cannot accept, such a theory. And it is because we accept ourselves, and trust the demand of our nature. We believe that there is such a thing as the assent of the soul in man, and that this is greater, infinitely, than the assent of the mere intellect.

The preceding considerations are of a general character. They depend for their effect upon the response given by man's nature as a whole, rather than upon their distinct acceptance by the intellect.

It will be claimed by some that they are unfair to the intellect, that they belittle its dignity and importance. The writer is aware that he might easily himself in some moods say the same, should he meet these words in the writings of another. There are times when the high action of the intellect in faith seems all-important. There are times when it seems the least important; when the more vital elements

of faith appear plainly to be present even in the absence of the intellect's clear assent. There are noble-minded men and women, unbelievers, of whom it can be said with good hope, Their unbelief is only intellect deep, so well are their hearts and lives attuned to the spirit of his teachings, whose divinity their intellects have as yet failed to discern. Until this is added to the assent of heart and will, the faith of such cannot be complete; but there is every reason to hope that, if not in this world, in the clearer light of the next, this will be gladly yielded.

To the writer's mind the rational argument for the theistic faith is strong, even in the full measure of its importance. It is as strong probably as is consistent with faith's requirement, that feeling and will shall have an adequate share in its production. That the future will protect this all-important interest he does not doubt. His own concern is rather with faith in general, and especially with faith in that special revelation of himself by the all Father to man of which the bible is the record.

II

COMMUNION

If the world's history could be written out from what will prove in the end to be its central point of view, it would be but the record of God's plan for bringing mankind into the knowledge of and communion with himself. What we call profane history is not in the larger view separate from sacred history; they are but different volumes of the same book. Human development works all together to accomplish the end sought in man by the power that made him; a complete union of life between him and God. Now it cannot possibly be maintained that what we call distinctively the life of religion in the soul constitutes the whole of this communion. Physical science, or the knowledge of the laws of the material universe, may become the basis of a very sincere communion with God; for it is the study of God's thoughts in a vast and peculiarly interesting form of the divine energy. A sympathetic knowledge of these thoughts would bring the human spirit

into participation with God in that field of activity; thereby imparting to it a peculiar joy. But this alone would not deserve the name of communion: it would be only one side of communion, and would lack completeness until the other side were added. Communion, as the word by its derivation signifies, is a life in common between souls. In order to a true communion between God and man, there must be first in each the recognition of the other's separate and personal existence. Then only does it become possible for each to enter into the other's life. This mutuality of life is the single feature indispensably characteristic of communion. A human spirit may feel an immense delight in its sympathy with certain thoughts of God, and it may be a very pure delight. This feeling is sometimes loosely called communion, as when Bryant speaks of holding "communion with the visible forms of nature." But while permissible in poetry, this is not the language of fact. Communion is not sympathy, but reciprocity of sympathy, and the peculiar happiness it yields is due to that fact. When the great astronomer, Kepler, announced his discovery of the laws governing the planetary movements, his statements were received with neglect. Then he exclaimed: "My book may well wait a century for a reader,

since God has waited six thousand years for an observer!" Such a saying could spring only out of a spirit in communion with this God. The two were friends; they shared each other's thoughts; and none could take from the lonely thinker the joy he found in this divine communion.

This difference between a mere unreturned sympathy, and communion, is illustrated by the joy felt by so many in the *harmonies* of the natural world. There are certain rhythmical vibrations in nature, to which the nervous organism in man can be made to respond, whereby the mysterious spiritual perceptions of harmony are awakened in the soul. We give the name æsthetics to this sphere of the soul's life.

What, then, is beauty of form or color, what is music, what is the charm of thoughts clothed in words fittingly and harmoniously chosen, if it is to end in nothing more than the mere awakening of these sensuous perceptions? There is in that case a sympathy with a thought of God; there is none with God himself the thinker of the thought; still less is there the sense of an answering sympathy from him. But what if it be true that there are *spiritual* harmonies of infinite range and depth and sweetness and power, and that God's heart of

beauty is the central seat where they have their dwelling? What a possibility then of a blessedness in the communion of a human spirit with that spirit far beyond what any ordinary sympathy with beauty can afford!

I shall assume that communion with God in the sense named is the very heart of anything that can be properly called religion, and as a necessary consequence that no system of thought can afford a basis of religion which does not recognize the source from which man springs, as a being that can enter into communion with him. This would of course exclude the agnostic theory of the universe from the category of possible religious systems, since it utterly fails to furnish this essential ground of a religious life.

Now the thought I urge is that religion, or the pursuit of this possible community of life between God and the soul, is not aside from the general revelation of himself which God is making in the world's development, but rather forms a part of it. The great place which religion, even in its lower forms, holds in the world's history is sufficient proof of this; as is also the fact that the study of the religion of any people is so great a help to the understanding of their temporal conditions. In the study of the Old and New Testaments, we are

introduced, so we believe, to the knowledge of a special work of instruction and help instituted and carried on by God in a definite historic period, to the end that the life of religion might be advanced in souls. If we seek for the reason of God's undertaking such a work in our behalf, it may be found in part in man's extreme ignorance and distance from God (an ignorance, if the doctrine of evolution be true, inherent in his nature as derived from an antecedent animal creation, by the ordination of God himself), which must needs be somehow relieved before a way could be opened for him into a knowledge of his creator.

The doctrine of a special divine revelation is so closely connected with that of the Divine Spirit that in order to its proper consideration a few words at least must be said on that topic. This doctrine stands very high, I think second only to that of the divine unity, among the improvements made in the Old Testament, in the conception of God. The spirit of God, one spirit evidently, is the agent in the world's creation; it is the inspirer also of the genius of the artist,[1] the wisdom of the prudent, and especially of the prophetic gift. It is more than this; it is the inspiring force by which God is constantly seeking to influence unto

[1] Ex. xxxv., 35.

higher forms the free will and conscience in man.[1] We may conceive of this as the most essential and certainly the most congenial part of the work of the Divine Spirit. It is clearly recognized in the Old-Testament records; it is no less undeniably present in the more general unfolding of the world's life. When, for example, Herbert Spencer, one of many, admits "a naturally revealed end, and that the highest life, toward which the power manifested in evolution works," what is it he maintains save in a more general form the identical truth which the Christian theist holds specifically in his doctrine of the Holy Spirit? This peculiar title is only bestowed on the Spirit in the New Testament; the word holy in the two or three instances in which it is applied to the Spirit in the Old Testament being used as an appropriate adjective only. None the less is it clear that God's special revelation of himself was, from the beginning, the work of the Spirit in his capacity as the Holy Spirit—that is, the Spirit acting on souls possessed of reason and power of choice, to bring them into communion with their maker.

It is peculiarly important in our day, and will help to the solution of many problems, if we bear in mind the reciprocal influence naturally

[1] Gen. vi., 3.

exerted on each other by these two forms of God's self-revelation—that in nature, and that in grace. We Christians are familiar with the effect Christianity has had on the world's great thinkers, and full ready to claim the credit of it. We ought equally to recognize their importance to us; and the essential help they render us in the shaping of our religious thought. The tendency of men working in a single sphere is to narrowness, and Christianity is not an exception to this. Every great reform in the church's life has been a revolt against narrowness, and had its origin in the larger and freer spirit of some great age. It was so in the Reformation under Luther, and in the rise of Puritanism in England. Nor can Christianity hope, nor ought it to desire, to pass through an age of such disclosures of his thoughts in many fields as God is now making to men, without being greatly influenced by it. What we call the spirit of the age, and the Germans by a better name, the world-spirit (Weltgeist), full as it is, on the one side, of weakness and error, has in it, on the other side, still more that is from God. The bible is of great account in shaping this other side. The world-spirit cannot escape being influenced thus by the gospel, however it may try. It will certainly influence the bible truths in return. And it

has one advantage, in its judgments of Christianity, over Christian thinkers, namely this: that it is capable of using God's other self-revelations with a freedom impossible to them. Especially is it free to perceive and free to criticise conventionalized Christian teachings, whose force, adapted to past rather than present conditions, has become largely spent. This also is from God, and furnishes the church with its principal hope of an ever new and increasingly glorious development of its sublime system of truths.

So much concerning the relation to each other of the truths of God revealed in the world's general progress, and his special revelation of religious truths given us in the bible. Somewhat needs still to be said as to the form in which the latter of these two revelations is clothed.

The bible, which we reverence as comprising that revelation, is simply a book conveying to us the history of this special effort of divine grace in our behalf. It is not even so much as a book, if by that term is meant the product of a single impulse, or a work marked by evident unity of purpose. The bible is a compilation rather than a book; it is a compilation arranged to picture the unfolding in human history of this endeavor of God in our behalf, so that it

shall be before our eyes for us to see it in its irregular but, on the whole, advancing progress. Its purpose is to introduce us to this course of things, and, if we are open thereto, to make us partakers in it. I shall ask your indulgence while I mention a few of the characteristic features of this history. Let us remember in doing this that the interest of supreme importance is not the book, nor the authorship of this or that portion of it, but the progress of the events which it portrays.

1. This book is the product of many minds. It may be called a collection of documents rather than a book. Some of the writers were actors in the scenes described, many doubtless were not. They were all so imbued with the spirit of the events which they portray that they make the impression on us of being inspired for the task by the same Divine Spirit that inspired those events.

2. Mark well that the book takes the form it does—that of history. The makers of the bible plainly behold a plan of God in the events they describe, and deem it their chief business to admit others to see the process of this unfolding as it was. They seem like evolutionists by anticipation. It is as though they understood the increased importance which will be imparted to history when God shall at last reveal clearly

to man that truth. They seem to write not for the present merely, but for the farthest times as well. In this sense surely, if not in the smaller one of mere textual accuracy, they were guided by the Divine Spirit. It is doubtless in the events themselves, as they move onward to their appointed goal, that this divine control is most essential, but it is an added boon to humanity if we may believe their record also to be inspired by the same Spirit of all grace.

3. The book is characterized throughout by the very important fact that it appeals to man in the totality of his powers, and not to man in the exercise chiefly of the reason or the critical sense.

We have seen the commanding importance in our life of faith-knowledge as compared with science-knowledge. We many say then of the bible that it meets our human needs for the reason that it lies wholly in faith's realm, and touches man in all the spheres of his being's life. We note especially that it acts with equal power on each of his three principal faculties—the intellect, feeling, and will. Even the free action of the imagination is not wanting in the bible records. Rather in various of its narratives, and especially some describing supernatural events, does it seem to the critic to be given too free a range. But if descriptions of miraculous events occur in the Old

Testament which strain the credulity of some, it must at least be acknowledged that this was doubtless true to the spirit of the history it recounts, and significant of the commanding influence their faith had come to exert in that day over the entire natures of those who were actuated by it, as also of those who gave form to its records. The miracles of the New Testament, by reason of their nature, the testimony supporting them, and their connection with a being presenting so many claims to a participation in the divine nature, stand on separate and far higher grounds; nor is the number small of those to whom the relation in which the Old Testament stands to the New will be an all-sufficient guarantee of the miraculous element contained in it. But should the critical study of the bible in the future create an increased doubt in many minds as to the authenticity of at least a portion of the miraculous events narrated in it, this much is to be said: The bible is not less true in its animating spirit, and it is more true to our human nature, and better fitted to move the human mind, for the reason that it tends to an excess rather than a deficiency of faith in God and in his nearness to those he loves. However our conception may change, under God's own teaching, as to the relative value of different

forms which his special work for us assumes (and we shall come, I believe, more and more to see its highest manifestation in the Holy Spirit's renewing efficacy), we may rest assured that when the issue shall at last be made clear, our largest faith will be found not to have surpassed but rather fallen below the true greatness of the revelation.

4. I shall detain you with only one thought more. This history is peculiarly characterized by the appearance of great religious saviors, founders, geniuses—such men as Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and the prophets, of whom (or should the narrative ever be proved fictitious, of the writers who invented them) it may be said without fear of contradiction, that they imparted to mankind a large share of the principal religious truths, upon which faith in God builds to-day and seems likely to build for all coming time. The Lord Jesus was the last in the line of these great faith builders, and was the legitimate outcome of his predecessors. The history finds in him its consummation; the heavenly grace ripens in him to its perfect fruit. Should this fruit ever turn to ashes in the hand, it is difficult, indeed, to see what fortune of perfect good, or, to use Spencer's phrase, of "highest life," the future can possibly have in store for humanity.

III

THE OLD-TESTAMENT IDEA OF GOD

My purpose in the present and next following chapter is to point out the principal improvements in the idea of God given to the world in the Old-Testament revelation. No attempt will be made to distinguish the order of time in which these were imparted. The history affords no clear data to determine this; and the fact of the presence of these ideas in the Jewish system as a whole will suffice for our purpose.

1. The fundamental Old-Testament discovery concerning God was the fact of the divine unity, which now first took its place in human thought as a definite and comprehensible truth. The reader of the Old Testament comes at times upon apparent limitations of this truth in the Jewish mind, which have led some to question the purity of the doctrine as a matter of national belief; the question, therefore, as to what the real facts of the case were becomes one of importance. The polytheism prevalent

in Assyria and the Canaanitish tribes surrounding Israel included, as one of its features, a belief in tribal or national divinities, upon whose favor both the individuals of each nation and the nation as a whole were largely dependent. The prevalence in their vicinity of this belief proved a temptation to Israel to think of Jehovah as their national divinity, rather than as the maker and lord of the universe. That this should have been true of the masses of the people in periods of especially spiritual declension is not surprising; but, on the contrary, quite what might be expected of ordinary human nature. Its practical effect was not merely to degrade their own conception of God, but what was worse, to put the heathen gods on a level with Jehovah. This, accordingly, became a great sin in Israel, and furnished frequent occasion for the reproaches of their prophets; a fact which is of itself sufficient proof how gross a departure from the pure faith of Israel was any questioning of the divine unity. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord"; these words, prefacing the ten commandments as they are given in Deuteronomy, are the true theologic watchword of Israel.

An immanent method of conceiving God was almost universally prevalent in the ancient

world. Religion was permeated with nature worship, grew largely out of nature worship. The impressive sights always before their eyes in the natural world—sun, moon, the stars, forests, rivers, and especially the vast breadths of sky and ocean—were to them instinct with divinity. The same thing was true at a later day among the Greeks, only here they assumed higher and more cultured forms. A great charm lies to this day upon forest and fountain, upon the vineyards and the crops of ripening grain, upon the blue of the sky, and the crested waves of the ocean, by reason of the spirits with which the imagination of the Greeks peopled them. When Wordsworth, wearied with the distance at which the world at large in his day seemed to stand from God, exclaimed—

Great God! I 'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn,—

who does not see that there was much in the best of those old beliefs, pagan as we call them and as they were, that could enrich the common life of even the lowliest? Now it was the

immanent conception of God which animated those old mythologies; and the mind of this age is coming back to that view of God, in hope to obtain thereby a more comforting and true sense of his nearness. We shall, however, mistake if in doing this we lose our hold of that solemn and momentous fact concerning God to which the Jew first among men rose, when he distinctly conceived the unity of the Godhead, and based it on the fact of the divine transcendance. There is one God, in a proper sense, apart from and over the world; for by his antecedent thought (foreknowledge St. Paul calls it), and his eternal purpose, were heaven and earth and all that in them is, created. This was the doctrine of the divine unity as it found expression in the higher Jewish mind. It was in reality the enthronement of an eternal purpose over the universe. It was setting the changeless will of God on high as the source whence all sprang which the eye can see or imagination conceive. It was nothing less than the whole of things, the universe, which was to the true Jew the subject realm of this creator and lord. Earth and heaven went together in his cosmology, the kingdoms of this world and the heavenly Sabaoth.

The consequences of this improvement in theology are visible, under a multitude of

forms, on every side of us to-day. The doctrine of the trinity has its necessary ground of preparation in this previous discovery of the divine unity. The fatherhood of God; the sonship of Christ; the personality of the Spirit; man's own native and universal dignity in his sonship of God; his unimpeachable individuality; the destiny open to him, however denied here, in the farther and greater issues of his life;—all these great truths, lying at the basis of the social conscience, and of all true advance of the human race, are the outgrowth and natural consequence of that fundamental dogma of the Old-Testament theology, the unity of God.[1]

2. In the preceding chapter I expressed in brief my sense of the importance of the doctrine of the divine spirit in the Old-Testament theology as second only to that of the divine unity. I shall not enter at length into that subject here, since it will be coming constantly before us as we proceed. It will be enough to say here that the doctrine of the divine spirit is complementary in the Old Testament to its transcendental conception of God. It completes that conception by providing it with the

[1] For suggestive remarks upon this and kindred subjects, see Prof. H. S. Nash, on *The Genesis of the Social Conscience*, chap. iii. The Macmillan Co.

element in the being of God through which he becomes an ever-present, and, as I believe, an ever-new creative force in the world's development. We have now become familiar with the thought of the world's creation, as a process slowly unfolding through countless ages; and the story of this creative process, as it is given in the opening chapters of Genesis, begins with the words: "And the earth was waste and void; . . . and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." This statement is not only not out of harmony with the results of modern science, but in a harmony with them beyond what could be expected, if we consider the age in which it was written. There could be no more explicit assertion of the agency of the Divine Spirit in the world's creation.

The thought of man's physical life naturally goes with that of the material creation, but the Old Testament is full of the teaching that the spiritual life, in the broader sense of that term, is the product also of that Spirit. Isaiah counts as proceeding from that source—"the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."

A fact of far greater importance is that of the peculiar function ascribed to the Divine Spirit, by which he strives, to use the Old-Testament

phrase, with the reason and conscience of men when they appear on the stage, to lead them to holy choices and an upward tending life. We have seen this to be an anticipation of the New-Testament teaching concerning the Holy Spirit; and it may be questioned whether one of the highest uses of the doctrine of the divine unity be not the ground it furnishes for a more distinct, and, as the New Testament represents it, a personal, agency of the Holy Spirit. The important question whether the revelation of the truths concerning his own being made by God to the Jews is a special revelation, in a sense in which his revelation of his truths in the spheres of æsthetic and philosophic thought made to the Greeks is not, is one which turns, in the long run, on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. If there be anything in the Christian system which commends itself as unquestionably super the merely natural, our soberer reason will find that also in the bestowment of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men, for their new birth and constant inward quickening.

3. The third improvement in the knowledge of God furnished in the progressive unfolding of the Old-Testament history, was that conveyed in the name of God given to Moses from out the burning bush.

The word Jehovah was rendered in the King James version, "I am that I am." The thought is that of the self-existence of God, carrying in it also that of his eternal existence. It has been believed that nothing could surpass this in sublimity, or be more expressive of the inmost essentialness of God's being. The probably more exact rendering given in the margin of the revised version, "I will be that I will be," connotes that sublime truth, while it expressly conveys another, of even greater importance not only to the Jew in that far-off age, but to mankind in every age. The difference is that between the eternally existing One and the eternally evolving One; it is that between the God of changeless being and the God of eternal, and eternally unfolding, purposes; it is, in a word, that between the eternal "I am" and the eternal "Is to be." I am the Is to be, is the interpretation he who chooses has full right now to give to the name. Have we not then here an even heightened sublimity, beyond which we can imagine nothing conceivable by the human mind? The past is all in it, even that far-off counsel of God's love, which led him "in the beginning" to plan a social universe, whereby in the blessedness of all and their common love to himself he might gratify his holy passion of loving companionship.

The great future also, as it has been, is now, and forever will be unrolling, is all in the name. The advent of the greater "prophet like unto himself" to whom the people should harken was here; and here also was that destined fulness of the times, when all the ends of the earth should see the salvation of God. We count as a superstition the feeling among the later Jews which regarded it as an impiety to utter the name of Jehovah; but the feeling that this, above all other names which human lips can utter, was sacred, we may well believe to have been inspired by the Spirit of all wisdom.

4. To these natural attributes of God I shall add one other out of the moral sphere, namely, his righteousness.

Right in the moral world is the foundation on which all rests. It is the pure objective to the subjective feeling—ought. It is the wherefore of every kind of moral good. If justice is a moral good, and obligatory upon men, it is because it is right to be just. If love is a moral good, and obligatory upon men, it is because right demands that we love. Right is the only moral imperative. It alone commands the conscience. It is in morals what space is in the world of matter, the form under which all necessarily exists. It is a form, not

in itself a quality, though without it there can be no conception of moral quality.

In the Old-Testament revelation of truth, righteousness, which simply means conformity to right, is the characteristic word,—a fact which brings it into harmony with the laws of the moral universe. Right is put where it belongs, at the foundation. Examining more closely, we find that God himself is represented both as subject to, and in fact controlled by, the law of right. This is, indeed, only a natural result of the belief in his unity. Imagine an infinite being who is in the completest sense one—one not merely as distinct from any other possible being, but one within himself; all the powers at one among themselves; mind in perfect harmony with heart and will, and, what is if possible still more important, will in perfect harmony with mind and tastes. Consider that among the things included in the knowledge of such a being must be the clear vision of those moral ideals, ideals of character and conduct, that command the allegiance of the true-hearted. The equilibrium of powers existing in such a being would naturally secure his perfect loyalty to these ideals. I say naturally, not necessarily; for I would not by any word throw doubt on the complete free-will of the author of the universe. But supposing him

free, we can but suppose also that in him, the Infinite One, unlike his finite creatures, the absolute harmony of his powers must produce a nature set unalterably toward the good. This was the conception of God in his moral nature, which obtained among the Jews, and the wonder is that it should have been as clearly defined and as firmly held as it was. We have seen righteousness to be the one unquestionably characteristic word of the Old Testament. Observe, then, that this righteousness dwelt first in God. As the Jew conceived of righteousness in man, it was the reflection of the righteousness in God. Righteousness in man, to the thinkers among the Jews, was right as God sees right to be; it was man's conformity to the divine ideals of right. If now it be asked to what extent the divine righteousness was a truth new to the human mind, the answer, incredible as it may at first seem, must be that it was wholly new. An irresistible impulse seems to have been upon the human mind up to this time, to think of the supernal powers as beings who were a law unto themselves, and whose ruling principle was license rather than right. It was, perhaps, not unnatural that this should have been the conception in the minds of the men of that age, concerning beings of whom their leading

thought probably was, that they were free from the limitations which so discomfited their own lives. Such beings they instinctively conceived of as free to do whatever they pleased; but that among the multitude of their divinities there should have been so few whose natural tastes were supposed to be just and kindly, and that if some such there were they were still thought of as taking offence so easily and giving way upon slight provocation to malignant passions, this affords a most unhappy commentary upon the conditions of life prevailing in that age, and especially upon the injustice and cruelty which men were accustomed to see among those holding positions of power. Plainly, then, it was the birth of a new day in the world's life, when it became known to a few favored ones among men, that God was a lover of righteousness, and himself perfectly obedient to its laws.

But this fact standing alone would be of little use to man. Even the necessary inference that the perfect ideals of moral good were known to God, even the fact that he was actually controlled by those ideals in his dealings with men, could do but little for them, if it was impossible for them to discover the divine principles of conduct, either in the progressive development of the world's life as a

whole, or in any clear historic series of the divine activities. We are brought, then, here to the supreme value of the Jewish history, which is found in the fact that, in the series of historic events therein recorded, we have revealed to us at least a beginning of truth necessary to be known concerning righteousness, as it is in God and as it ought to be in man. This is the subject now opening before us, and of which the next chapter will treat.

IV

THE JUSTICE OF GOD

I THINK it well to observe in the opening of this chapter, that whatever information the Old Testament may yield us as to the nature of the divine righteousness will be entirely unaffected by any recent critical studies of those scriptures, since the evidence upon which we rely is found in historic events which are incontestable, and in documents which all accept.

What is it, then, which the Old Testament through the various means which it employs has taught us concerning the divine righteousness? This is the vitally important question to which we are brought.

It is not a new answer which I am able to make to this question; but one as old as old theology, so called, itself. I believe the very heart of the discovery made in the Old Testament concerning the divine righteousness to be contained in the word justice. But if this word has a familiar sound, and suggests at the first thought only a very old and well-worn

idea, let us remember that this is equally true of the word love, which corresponds in the New Testament to justice in the Old. Let me further say, if either of these words, as things now are, fails to be understood in its indispensable importance, it is not the word love, but rather the word justice; and if either is waiting till it come to its proper place in the Christian system, it is not love, but justice in its relations to love, and especially justice as the indispensable antecedent condition of any love that can be relied on to meet the possible needs of the kingdom of right. Nor are signs wanting that in these latter days the way is coming to be open for new light upon the nature and claims of justice and upon its true place in the scheme, even as it has been generally conceded to be open to new light upon the nature of love, and its supreme importance in the system. A candid spirit is, therefore, asked in our examination of the place given to justice in the Old-Testament economy, and the nature in God and man of the justice which it sets before us.

The Old-Testament law is commonly called the Mosaic law from the name of the reputed founder of the Jewish state. Our Lord himself accepts this use, nor has criticism as yet been able to cast any valid doubt upon its pro-

priety. I shall adopt this usage, taking its truth for granted. Now, as it was given to Moses to see the righteousness of God, justice was its central attribute. This was that form of righteousness which revealed God most impressively to his spirit, and what he saw greatest in God he gave to the people entrusted to him—he made justice the controlling motive in the system of law and government which he created for them. The Old-Testament scriptures glow with the solemn light of this word and of the kindred judgment (or judgments) of the Almighty.

Let us seek first to conceive clearly the meaning of this great word; for there is a use of it as a general term, both in common speech and in the bible, which is scarcely distinguishable from right itself. If we allow ourselves to become entangled in this meaning of the word, we simply go around in a vicious circle. Justice in this sense of it is accordance with the principle of right, as also right is accordance with the principle of justice. Using the word in this general sense we accomplish nothing.

There is a narrower employment of the word which is its distinctive and therefore its proper meaning. Justice is the rendering towards another that which is equal, or that which is his due from us, or that which is conformable

to his proper claims upon us. How, then, shall we learn what the proper claims of one being on another related being are? Let us see what light the Old-Testament history gives us whereby to answer this question. The thoughtful Jew evidently carried this question back to the proper relations between God and his creatures, as he believed these to be illustrated in the history of his own people. In Jehovah's relations with the Jewish people these claims were to his mind exactly met. He saw in them a perfect ideal of what the law of justice demands in the case of creatures in normal relations with their creator and lord. What, then, was that treatment of his people by Jehovah, which they accepted as the expression of his perfect justice? The question is of peculiar importance. Much depends upon it which is essential to the proper understanding of the Christian system in its completed form; nor is it possible for us to be too deliberate or painstaking in our answer. My own studies have led me to this answer: The changeless truth underlying the demand of justice on the part of God toward his creatures was the fact that having made them for life—made them, that is, with powers that demand exercise and desires that demand satisfaction, it rested upon him as an obligation required by

his own perfections, that he should guard their right to lead this life. We can only think of this as a self-evident obligation—an instinctive feeling in the mind of God necessitated by the perfect balance of his powers. That this is in fact eternally true of God we have abundant proof in an instinct which by his own ordinance is universal among his sentient creatures. I mean the instinctive feeling implanted in every creature, irrational or rational, that it is his right by the very fact of his existence, to live, or do his best to live, his life. The slightest consideration will show the sacredness and necessity of this instinct; for without it we can conceive of no motive to activity in any rational creature, nor can we imagine any ground for the continued activity necessary for existence in any creature. Even the vegetable creature is not made independent of this law.

Earth holds, indeed, a mighty mystery—its one greatest mystery — that, namely, of the vastly multiplied hindrances to life. There is hope that science, which, through its theory of evolution, is disclosing to us the law that gives rise to these hindrances, especially in the animal creation, may in time furnish us with new light on the divine purpose in making the world subject to this law. My own hope is

strong that this comfort may yet be vouchsafed to man. Meanwhile to the Jew, who had now, as he believed, been received into the relation of a special covenant with God,—a covenant governed on both sides by the principles of perfect righteousness, since it was of Jehovah's own making,—this evidence was furnished of God's perfect justice: that he had removed from them the obstacles that hindered their life. He had broken the bondage in which they had been so long confined; he had set their feet in a large place. In return they owed to Jehovah their gratitude and obedience. This was in essence a matter of simple reciprocity. God had opened to them an exceeding fulness of life; but, on the other hand, his fulness of life depended now on their gratitude and love. How plainly justice forbade that by their disobedience they should put an obstacle in the way of it! I do not maintain that this was formally reasoned out by the framers of the Jewish system. None the less does it appear to have been the philosophy which lay at the basis of their thinking.

Doubtless the Jew would have affirmed that God was as distinctively just toward the heathen as toward themselves, but that their relation to him was an abnormal one by reason of their disobedience and wickedness; so that the

divine justice was free to take toward them the forms of displeasure and punishment. Especially were there no covenant mercies to be bestowed on them.

As regards the claims of justice in the relations of men with one another, the foundation principle on which the Jew built was the same as between man and God. Every human being is conscious that he has a right, in so far as he does not impede the proper rights of others, to live his life unhindered by the adverse acts of his neighbor. This is a natural inherent claim in justice of every man. But what he may rightly claim of his neighbor, each knows intuitively that his neighbor, the conditions being the same, may rightly claim of him. Hence the law of justice in human relations, which is simply the unfolding into the variety of its applications of the principle that no man shall deprive another of the means properly belonging to him of living his life. The recent treatise of Mr. Herbert Spencer on Justice seems to the writer to have put this subject, in its human aspects, on the true ground; and students of ethics may well acknowledge their obligations to him, anticipated in part, as he owns to having discovered later, by Kant. Spencer's formula of justice is as follows: "Every man is free to do that which he will,

provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man."[1] The principle, as it has taken form in my own mind, without consciousness at the time of my obligations to Mr. Spencer, is of wider application, covering the relations of men to God as well as to one another (a matter of essential importance to the theologian), and throwing a valuable light, as I believe, on the relation in which the justice at the foundation of the Old-Testament revelation stands to the love which forms the substance of the New.

Returning to our study of the Mosaic code, we have the law briefly summarized in the ten commandments. These not only express its spirit, they expound its spirit in the several most important duties of life. The earlier table concerns man's obligation in justice to God; the latter, his obligations in justice to his fellow-men. As to the former of these, we need to bear in mind that the peculiar temptation of the Jew was to unite the worship of false heathen gods with that of "the ever living and true God," or even in many cases to forsake the worship of Jehovah for that of these false deities. They were tempted also, like their heathen neighbors with whom they became allied sometimes in relations of mar-

[1] *Justice*, D. Appleton & Co., page 46.

riage or others of close affinity, to substitute the worship of idols, which the eye could see and the hands handle, for the pure service of Jehovah. In other cases it was to use lightly the august name of their God. And in still others to use their time, as though he, the giver of it, had no claims upon it. These things, therefore, were all solemnly forbidden in the earlier table. And, for the reason evidently that parents were to their children in the place of God, it was commanded that children should pay to their parents the honor which was their due.

And if the earlier table defined thus clearly the claims in right of God upon his creatures, what can be plainer than that the purpose of the second table was to guard every man against the danger of being robbed by his neighbor of the things which constitute his life? The interests singled out to be protected are:

(1) His security in the possession of life itself.

(2) The purity of his home.

(3) His property.

(4) His good name.

No man shall deprive another of any of these, for they are the means essential to a true life. And since unholy desires tend to

lead the soul on to acts of injustice, no man shall permit himself to covet these possessions of his neighbor.

It was, then, justice which the Jew recognized as the leading demand upon him of righteousness — justice as between man and God, and justice as between man and his fellow-man.

Much is accounted for by this fact—much that is fine, much that is peculiar, and much, it must be confessed, that savors of narrowness in the Jewish religion.

1. The negative character, so often remarked upon, of the Jewish law is explained: how it comes to pass that it is so largely devoted to prohibitions.

2. How it happens that its business seems to be chiefly with sin; to forestall sin if possible, to punish it when necessary.

3. How judgment—a word whose origin is apparently in acts of justice, and especially in the just retribution of sin—is the word more commonly employed in the Old Testament to express justice as between God and men.

4. And lastly, how atonement, or the reconciliation of the sinner with his God, and with his neighbor, came to have so great a place in the Jewish economy.

It is evident, concerning the Old-Testament

system as a whole—both its doctrine and ritual, —that it was adapted to the case of man while still in a lower stage of spiritual development. Its cult of justice as the supreme righteousness in God and man—justice rather than love—is sufficient proof of this. It is common in our day to speak of some act, or some course of conduct, as mere justice. The expression marks the inferior character of justice, but indicates even more forcibly, if possible, its essential importance—the fundamental moral principle, the fundamental demand which upright natures make upon themselves, the first and most sacred obligation in the intercourse of mankind, the indispensable bond of society. What higher claim can any system of thought possess upon the respect of men than to have been the first to clearly establish this principle?

And let us not forget that justice—low as it may rank among the forms of love, and distinct from its other forms as we may need for clearness' sake to hold it—is at the bottom still of love's essence. For by its very nature justice is plainly a form of unselfishness, and a very pure one; it is also an essential primary bond of love, an indispensable condition antecedent to love's reign, and even capable of indefinite advancement into the realm of love, as we shall see later. It was, therefore, on all

accounts an exalted function that was appointed to the Jewish people when they were made the medium of revealing to the world this great attribute.

We are prepared to believe beforehand that justice, as yet but slightly tempered with the love which it foreshadowed, must be imperfect even as justice, and is at the best but a step forward toward a greater fulness of life. I will refer to but a single point of inferiority, and one also of excellence peculiarly noticeable in the Jewish system.

Let it be conceded, then, as regards Moses himself, that it seems not to have been the larger justice he was capable of receiving, but rather in many cases bare justice in its narrower form of retaliation, or, as our Lord expressed it, the principle of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." This was especially true in the great instance of the treatment the Jewish deliverer, as also his disciple Joshua, felt themselves justified in bestowing on the nations which, on their arrival, they found in the occupancy of Palestine. Doubtless the ordinary law holds true of the Jews, that they became the possessors of Palestine because they were the superior race. It is interesting, however, to observe the grounds on which they justified their treatment of the preceding

occupants of the land. These they regarded as enemies of the true God and his people. It was in their minds a righteous business destroying such nations as these if they were contumacious ; a proper submission saved them. Doubtless other nations urged the same plea, but probably no others with so absolute a sense of the justice of it. Centuries after the work of Moses and Joshua, we find the same spirit, unabated in its fierceness, animating the prophet Samuel. What other fate was in the nature of things due to the Amalekites, hereditary and persistent enemies of God's people, but that they should be destroyed? Unfaithful ones might care for the spoils of such a people, and weaker spirits relent at the cruelty of slaying both "man and woman, infant and suckling"; but it was not for him, a prophet of the God in whom justice was absolute, to falter a moment. What a power in this stern spirit! And yet a power that was but weakness, when compared with the spirit of the cross.

Let it stand to the credit of the Jew, the clearness with which he recognized the fact, that if the chosen people transgressed God's law, they also would have to endure to the full the penalty. It was incumbent on them to beware; it was for them to "observe God's

statutes to do them," in the familiar phraseology of the code, lest they also should incur his wrath.

This was a stern view of God. Unsoftened it would have repelled. At first it did repel. One thing served to modify this feeling — it was the fact that God, as revealed by Moses, cared no less profoundly that his people should live together in the exercise of justice than that they should render to him what was rightly due from them.

We have here a complete innovation in human thought and a more marked advance than it is easy to conceive. The feeling of the greatness of the attribute of justice and of its importance to any prosperous intercourse among men must have been awakened in the human mind long before the time of Moses. The laws that held society together must always have been based, to a considerable extent at least, upon this principle. But hitherto, as we have seen, justice had not held a commanding place in men's conception of the supernal powers. These had been regarded as beings quick to take offence, and whose wrath might flame out at any moment unless they were diligently, in many cases even abjectedly, propitiated. Conceive, then, what it must have been to the Jewish people to be taught that

God was not only just in himself, but also in profound sympathy with that spirit among men. Their God was, indeed, a different thing to them from the gods of the heathen. He was a being to be feared, but with a holy fear; a being to be loved and feared. The fact we are here considering—that God was as deeply concerned in the welfare of men as in the accomplishment of his own welfare—this truth set forth so strikingly in the second table of the law—may be called the supreme discovery of Moses in the strictly moral field. It marks the long step in advance which it was given him to make in the practical knowledge of God.

It is evident that in hearts controlled by such thoughts as these was already laid a genuine ground of communion with God. It was indeed far from being the communion rendered possible by the love bestowed on us by Christ, but the divine justice as here revealed to the covenant people was sufficiently on the way to love to furnish a substantial ground of mutual sympathy and to be the means of a very blessed community of life. For God was now near to them, even in their common daily concerns in covenant faithfulness. Let his people only be true to him, living also justly with one another, and he will

be true to them. If they will be indeed his people he will be their God. He will bless their bread and their water, their basket and their store. He will give them abundant harvests and happy homes, and victory over their enemies, and peace in their borders. Their going out and their coming in shall be under his protecting care.

This was the conviction of the pious Jew; and it was the blossoming out of this assurance in the psalms which has converted that manual of pious feeling toward God into the Christian world's accepted book of uplifting devotion. There seems no reason why this should not continue to be the case. It is at least difficult to imagine how language shall ever be made to assume forms of higher sublimity, or to express a sweeter spirit of trust and praise. Nor need this tribute of our admiration be the less frankly paid, because when we read the imprecatory psalms we are moved to pity rather than to admiration—pity for those whose lot was cast so far behind the Lord Christ's golden day.

In concluding this chapter I shall note, without attempting to account for it, a remarkable historic fact—that, namely, of the extraordinary power of endurance which the Jewish people, alone among the nations of that age,

proved to possess. Notwithstanding their frequent infidelities to their own principles; notwithstanding their unparalleled misfortunes, deserved by reason of their infidelities; notwithstanding their division into two kingdoms, and the destruction of one, the more unfaithful of these; notwithstanding the conquest of the other, their deportation to Babylon, and the permanent abiding there of the greater part of them; notwithstanding the troubles that, at the very first, beset the restored portion; the later insidious, and for that reason peculiarly dangerous, influence of their Greek conquerors; the all-subduing and therefore peculiarly heart-breaking oppression of Rome; still the Jewish people survived, broken and peeled, it is true, but the one people on the known earth continuing in their laws, their institutions, and their belief, substantially unchanged from what they had been fourteen hundred years before.

During this long period they proved competent, it is especially noticeable, to produce great men—men possessed of the pristine vigor of their race, men able to restore the nation when in decay, re-establishing it in autonomy of power and of worship. What a long list of men, whose influence still tells on the world—Samuel, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Nehemiah—that mighty spiritual host the prophets;

those later saviors of the people the Maccabees! And a century and a half after them, when only a remnant seemed to remain in whom the old spirit of the race still lived, then at last came in God's good time (or was it only in man's good time?) the mighty Savior, toward whom all pointed, and in whom all was to find its consummation.

V

THE NEW-TESTAMENT IDEA OF GOD

In passing from the Old Testament to the New, we leave behind the realm of justice and enter on that of love. Many and great are the issues involved, of which the most clearly defined is this: we pass from the law that no man shall put an obstacle in the way of another man's living his life, to the higher principle that every man, in the measure of his ability, shall help every other to live his true life. This is the most striking of the contrasts between the old covenant and the new. It, however, covers the ground very imperfectly. For the revelation given us in the New Testament is not merely of love as it ought to be between man and his fellow-man, but primarily of love as it is in the heart of God. The New Testament follows, in this particular, the fashion set for it in the older dispensation; for as there justice was first exhibited as it is in God, so here with love. The love set before us is the love of God, even as it shines in the person of his Son.

It is therefore the perfect ideal of love that is presented to our view, and that not of love in some single lower form, as that of benevolence, but love in its plenitude, as it is in the being of God.

God works by processes, and it was through the unfolding life of Christ that he revealed to man his perfect love. This, then, is to be the theme of our study; but it may be a help before we enter directly upon it to set before our minds some of those leading elements in our Lord's self-consciousness which go to prove his fitness for such a task, and which are exhibited in his life too distinctly to admit of mistake concerning them.

1. We notice first the profound conviction which filled the soul of Christ, that he stood to the heavenly Father in a peculiar relation, different from that occupied by any other child of man. He described this relation by calling himself the "Son of God." It was not wholly aside from Jewish usage to bestow upon persons of exceptional powers the title Sons of God. It was, however, not as one among these that our Lord thought of himself. It was as one distinct from all others—*the* Son of God. No other shared this high relationship with him; on him alone among men was it bestowed. Among the disciples

of our Lord there were evidently some whose minds were largely occupied with the question what the philosophical ground of such a relationship could be. These questions resulted in the conception of that threefold distinction in the being of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—which has since received the name of the Trinity. The naturalness of this threefoldness in God, and the greater clearness of light into which the source whence springs the universe is set by this conception, are themes of unusual interest. We pass them by as not falling distinctly within our plan—which is concerned rather with the evidences of this higher consciousness in Christ. These may be briefly summed up as follows:

(1) That he had lived with God in a previous state of existence.

(2) That he had come to this earth holding a commission from the Father; which it was the single aim of his life to fulfil.

(3) That the Father alone knew the Son, and that the Son alone knew or was able to reveal to men the Father.

(4) That this power of his to reveal the Father was sufficient for all purposes whatever; since the Father had complete confidence in the Son; had bestowed on him all the knowledge of truth necessary to his work;

and, in a word, had "committed all things" into his hands.

Such were the chief among the prerogatives with which Christ in his own mind was invested by the fact of being the "Son of God." There can be little doubt in any careful student of our Lord's life that the sense of these things simply dwelt in him; that this was without effort and especially without pretension; that it was perfectly natural to him.

2. There dwelt in Christ another profound conviction which, to the writer's mind, was an even greater element of power than his conviction that he was the Son of God. This was the consciousness with which he was constantly possessed of being clothed with the fulness of the Divine Spirit. That this stands in a certain consistency with the Old-Testament teachings concerning God is sufficiently clear; and we may properly regard it as a link binding the New Testament to the Old, if it is true, as recorded by Matthew and Luke and affirmed in the Apostles' Creed, that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost. The question has been raised whether this article in the generally accepted creed of Christendom will stand the test of final criticism. It is true that Mark and John make no report of the miraculous conception; but then these writers are both silent

regarding the entire circle of incidents connected with the birth of Christ. On the other hand, the remarkable fitness of this doctrine to many of the unquestioned facts of Christ's life, is a very strong presumptive argument in its favor. The first of these facts is that of the descent of the Spirit of God in bodily form—the form of a dove—upon Jesus at his baptism, with the solemn consecrating words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The importance of this event cannot be said to have been overlooked by our Lord's biographers, since, it is generally acknowledged to mark an essential stage of progress in our Savior's life. Nevertheless we believe that most readers, and most commentators even, fail to recognize its extreme significance. There is evidently a great change — a leap rather in advance—in passing from the old to the new dispensation. Where then do we find the leading element in that change if not here in the descent upon Jesus of the Holy Spirit? In Jesus we have no longer, as was true in the greatest of the Old-Testament characters, an inspired one, but we have the actual presence of the Inspirer himself. Jesus was not, like the older prophets of his race, one who could at times be lifted up to receive a great truth from God.' In him the Spirit of

God himself had taken up his dwelling; even as we are told in the fourth gospel: "What he hath seen and heard, of that he beareth witness. . . . For he whom God sent speaketh the words of God; for he giveth not the Spirit by measure."[1] Whether these are the words of John the apostle or of John the Baptist is not made certain; but the Baptist's independent testimony is not less decided: "I indeed baptize with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

It is worthy of note that the descent of the Spirit of God is presented by Matthew and Mark in a subjective form. It is the Savior himself the action of whose consciousness is set before us in the scene: "And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Looking out over the life of Christ, as from the point of view we are now occupying it stretches on before us, we cannot doubt that the consciousness of his possession of the Holy Spirit which at this time awaked in him so dis-

[1] John iii., 32, 34.

tinctly, was never even for a moment lost. Not an instance can be discovered during Christ's entire ministry, when any other thought occurred to him than that the Spirit speaking in his words, and acting in his acts, was the Divine Spirit. When he preached the gospel, when he wrought his mighty works, when he raised the dead to life, he felt it to be the Spirit of God in him that spake, and acted, and awaked the dead. No other explanation is possible of the fact, that this man, in whom of all that have lived dwelt the least of self-consciousness, in the feeble sense of that word, was yet so full of the divine consciousness that he wrought the works of God in his own name, without a thought of there being anything in it that was strange. A child at his play is hardly more simple than he was in raising the dead to life.

The question of what we are to think of the miracles our Lord is reported to have wrought —a question rendered more difficult in our day by the increased sacredness which attaches to natural law—may perhaps best be considered here. Here at least is suggested the one consideration which to my own mind is of principal weight. To science unmodified—that is, held in entire independence of all knowledge coming by other avenues than that of the intellect,— any direct action whatever of the

Spirit of God on souls is as much a miracle as would be the multiplying of three loaves of bread and a few small fishes into food enough to satisfy the need of five thousand people. This is conceded by strict men of science in a variety of ways; the most familiar of which is their disbelief in any effect whatever in the power of prayer to change the mind of God.

Now there is a large, perhaps a growing, number of thoughtful and sincere Christians—and the combination of these two qualities in one Christian is always very hopeful—who in their secret hearts, if not openly, question the reality of the bible miracles; with the one exception, made by most of them, of our Lord's resurrection. Each reader knows, or ought to know, what his own experience in this matter has been. There is probably sufficient reason why such should question accounts of miracles occurring since the apostolic age (question, my feeling is, not deny); and even regarding the miracles recorded of Christ and the Apostles, I can see no reason why he should not be open-eyed to whatever evidence there may possibly be to suggest that the imagination of the witnesses of the miracle, or of its later historian, becoming servant to over-zeal, may have led them into error. With all such, however, one great truth, a mighty bulwark, indeed, remains

secure—that we are certified of the presence with us of God in a form above (super) the merely natural; namely, that of the gracious, personal Holy Spirit acting on our souls. But the scientist is right. This fact in itself is wholly above the world of mere nature; and he who can accept it need not fear to believe that with this power there was united in our Lord that of working miracles; and that the apostles when they received the gift of the Holy Spirit may have been invested with the same power. For my own part this is one of the cases where I feel justified in persuading myself to call in all my will-power, to silence doubt's clamor, and let me rest in the assurance of my Lord's complete divine efficiency.

And I am the more ready to do this when I remind myself how wonderfully at home he was among the thoughts of God—the sphere where our need of a supreme fulness of grace is beyond any other of our needs. Our Lord solemnly declared of himself that he was the light of the world. He meant by it the light of truth to men—a stupendous claim, and yet justified, as it could alone be justified, by the perfect freedom with which he moved among the thoughts of God. We do not, indeed, claim that this was true of all the thoughts of God; but it was plainly true with regard to

such of the thoughts of God, and all such, as lie in the spiritual sphere.

It may be freely conceded concerning Jesus that his interest seems to have been confined to this sphere, and that he was satisfied to move in this one round of the divine thoughts. If other modes of the divine activity—such, for example, as those opened by modern science, and which present God in adorable lights to the Christian of to-day—were known to him, he gave no sign of it. It is likely that he knew not these things, in the same way that he knew not the day nor the hour of his own final coming. They were of no use to him, in so far as they failed to minister directly to his work for human salvation. Great as these themes are, we may believe that they are among the things which Christ relinquished when he left behind his glory with the Father. But the vast realm of God's thoughts in the spiritual world was wide open to our Lord's mind. He had measured its heights; he had measured its depths; he knew it in its length and its breadth. He knew it well as one who had oft trodden its paths. No question in this realm seemed at any time to take him unawares; the right thought was always present. He had no need to reason out his conclusions; his mind wrought graciously and by intuitions;

it wrought in the clear comprehension of a perfect sympathy. He appeared never to be subject to nervousness, unlike so many of his greatest followers, and to know no weakness; his step was sure. It may be also safely claimed for him that his truths have the quality of adapting themselves to all the unfolding life of man, and will suffice in their proper realm, to all the needs of man to the end of time; that while the application of his principles will of necessity vary with the changing conditions of human life as it unfolds, those principles themselves remain and will remain, sufficient and unshaken; so that in the future, as thus far in the past, a single question will be sufficient to test the moral worth of any proposed action, or line of conduct—the question, Is it in accordance with the teaching and spirit of Christ?

This then is he, whose appearance at this time among men so changed the face of the earth. What we see, as we look out in advance over the scene, is this being—the only begotten Son of the eternal Father; who had received as his Father's gift the Spirit of God without measure. He is therefore one whose thoughts are God's thoughts, and his acts among us the acts of God. Is he not also in very truth an Incarnation of the Lord Jehovah—God in his continual self unfolding?

VI

THE RECONCILIATION OF THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN CHRIST

In the general record of the world's history the life of Jesus finds no place. During the period of more than a century that life was a hidden leaven: the world felt it, but saw it not, and made no account of it. The gospels tell us the story, but they are private annals, written and preserved within the bosom of the church itself. It is a wonder to some that this should be so, but in the nature of things it could hardly be otherwise. It is a sincere and wise providence that raised up no witness from the outside, especially prepared to write an independent life of Christ. In the workings of God in the world the natural triumphs over the unnatural. An outside record of such a life would be unnatural. Faith accepts its own records; and the story of Jesus written by humble believers and participants in his life,

written as it was given them to write, not only satisfies, it creates faith.

It is less easy to understand how it came about that so little account was made in these inner histories of our Savior's early life. His mother outlived him, and made her home with that one of the apostles whose subsequent history is best known. His brothers also (whatever the exact relationship indicated by that word), one of whom became an important man among the early Christians, could have narrated interesting things about his youth. It is incredible that they should not have sometimes done this, but no record of such sayings has come down to us. Aside from the simple remark concerning his childhood that "He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man," we have only the account of his adventure in Jerusalem with the doctors of the law at the age of twelve years. This incident presents to our view a strangely absent-minded, and no less spiritual-minded boy; a boy living in a world of his own, filled so early with scripture lore and the questions springing out of it, and yet a boy not necessarily possessed of more than a merely human endowment, since cases of a similar precocious thoughtfulness in children are not unknown among men. Rather is it true that the

occasional occurrence of instances like this is a fact which experience teaches us to expect, under the laws of our human development.

The eighteen years passed by Jesus between his visit to Jerusalem and his manifestation to Israel are hidden under an impenetrable veil. Would it probably minister to anything more than curiosity if that veil should be removed? We may believe not. One fact only is let slip as it were; that he was, during a part of this time at least, a carpenter and worked at his father's trade.

Believing, then, as we do, that Jesus is the last in the great line of the Jewish founders and restorers; and especially knowing, as we do, that he is God's appointed agent to advance the knowledge of himself among men, from that of the God of justice to that of the God of love; it must needs be a question of peculiar interest to us, of what sort his manifestations will be, when at last the Christ is revealed to Israel. It is this consideration which gives their importance to those two closely connected facts of our Lord's earliest appearance: his coming to John to be baptized in the river Jordan, and his forty days of temptation in the wilderness.

In his coming to John the Baptist Jesus was one among a great multitude. It had become

a fashion in all the region about to inquire of the new prophet. The impulse which was moving all hearts as one was the impulse to repentance; the desire was that which has so often stirred the spirit of men in masses, the desire to receive the forgiveness of sins. Every sincere disciple of John, every sincere receiver of his baptism came as a penitent. This is the first noticeable thing which separates Jesus from ordinary humanity. Jesus is in this fundamental respect unlike the other seekers, that he is one who walks apart; wrapped in his own thoughts, intent, as the apostle John so graphically and we feel sure truthfully pictures him, on problems peculiar to himself. When he presents himself to the Baptist, even the Baptist is seized with diffidence. A feeling of awe comes over him. He exclaims: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" The young man does not reject this homage. He concedes his desert of it rather in the strange reply: "Suffer it now, for so it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness." Here is no thought of penitence, no slightest trace of any consciousness of sin; and yet he is one, as we learn later, of all men most sensitive to the evil and guilt of sin. Here then already in Jesus, in a way the more impressive because unconscious, is presented a claim impossible for

ordinary humanity to make — the claim of sinlessness.

What does it mean that Jesus still consents to be baptized by John; nay counts it a matter of righteousness to be partaker—he the sinless one with the sinful—in the baptism of repentance? This is an important question. It has received various answers. The mere facts furnish no solution. They do suggest, and the light thrown on them by the later history strengthens the suggestion, that what may be called a divine consciousness in Jesus—that is a sense of God's very peculiar relation to him and presence with him—was awaking to clearness now in his mind, and contending with his human consciousness, his perfect sense of union with humanity. Suppose these two things to have indeed coexisted in this man. Suppose him, man as he knew himself to be, to have been filled with a sense of a mysterious union between himself and God; and that this feeling had come to be more to him that all else in life together—how separate must he then have seemed to himself from the multitude about him, common people, sinners moved just now by the felt need of forgiveness, to fall to-morrow again, not unlikely, into sin. We can easily imagine that it might be the last thought of such a being as this to

join the throng in their headlong rush to be cleansed by the Baptist.

But suppose there was existing in him also profoundly, the feeling of our common humanity; of its possible dignity, but its actual debasement in the mass of men. Suppose also that together with this not uncommon feeling there was the presence of a sympathy with men, in both their possible elevation and actual debasement, such as had not lived in any human soul before; such as could be born only in a spirit in truest union with the Father of all; how then might he have felt impelled to own this kinship, and as one to whom their guilt was as his own, to come with them to be baptized in the waters of repentance! Could he doubt, moreover, that he was doing God's will in this? Not that he could submit to the baptism of repentance as a sinner needing pardon; but that he could gladly submit to it as one of a race whose sins he, in a sense, imputed to himself—that is, counted as his own by reason of the perfection of his sympathy—and whose mediator with God he began to perceive that he was divinely commissioned to be. This must surely have been the righteousness which he felt called upon to fulfil, and which the descent of the dove, emblematic of the Holy Spirit; and the voice, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I

am well pleased," now first heard from heaven, sealed with the divine approval.

The scene that followed next in Jesus' life was the temptation. The main facts are these. After his baptism Jesus withdrew from the haunts of men in order to spend a period of time in meditation. What the precise questions he was revolving were, we are not told; nor what the process of his thoughts; nor, in any logical form, what the conclusions at which he arrived. It is made clear that the time was one of a profound testing of his spirit. The word translated temptation conveys this thought expressly. We miss the significance of this passage in Christ's life, if we do not bear in mind the fact that it was, in a double sense, the testing of his spirit. It was adapted in the first place to disclose his quality and fitness for the strain which was to come upon him. More especially was it fitted to illumine, direct, and establish his spirit in the conflict of feeling which was then occupying him. His thoughts were evidently in the realm of intuition; they were communings with his own spirit, and the Spirit of God which had been given him; they were the openings of his soul to the movings of the Divine Spirit; they bear clear marks that the process in his mind was

that of the reconciliation of the divine with the human consciousness in him.

It seems to have been the case that from the first he had felt a peculiar relationship with God. The early process of the development of this feeling is concealed from us, save as we have a glimpse of it in the scene in the temple. But we perceive plainly now that it is awakening into the sense of a most near and complete union with God; a relationship whose nature he unfolded more fully later, when he spoke of himself as the Son of the Father. The presence of this divine consciousness in the temptation is seen in the assurance which he evidently felt, that the awful prerogative was bestowed on him of calling in the power of God to his aid. But the nearness of God is still more apparent in his so strenuous effort, in the use of that prerogative, to rise above all merely human promptings, and perfectly to think the thoughts of God. This was that testing of his spirit (or temptation) into which the onward moving of his life had now brought him.

It was in the purpose of God; it was also in the nature of things; that the prince of the powers of evil should be present, in this solemn crisis, to reinforce with his suggestions the promptings of the human nature in Jesus. It was not given our Lord to escape this

universal human experience. We need not necessarily suppose that the tempter appeared in any material form; that is not his custom: the spirit of evil spoke to the spirit in Jesus.

His first appeal was to the sense of bodily desire; the imperious desire for food in one who had been long fasting. The thought suggested to the mind of Jesus was that it was possible for him to convert the very stones into bread to satisfy his hunger. The question was whether he might properly use the power bestowed on him for his own personal relief, when convenient; thus making him independent of the ordinary conditions of humanity. He recognized the thought as a suggestion of the devil, and rejected it.

The second temptation was more subtle and appealed to a much stronger passion. Satan said in effect: "Take your place on the pinnacle of the temple that overhangs the Kedron valley; thence throw yourself down in the sight of men, and let all know that God's angels are at your service to uphold you." Consider the wonder and glory of such an act; the feeling of security it would give him against the contingencies of the future; the power over men's minds with which it would clothe him! This temptation also he perceived to be of Satan, and rejected it.

And now it is as if the tempter will stake all on a single cast. From the mountain's summit to which the wanderings of Jesus, under the guidance of the Spirit, had led him; it was as though all the kingdoms of the world were spread out before him. Here the devil whispered to his heart: "Use wisely the divine power with which you are clothed, and these all shall be yours." This too he clearly saw to be a suggestion of the evil one, an invitation to worship him instead of his eternal Father in heaven, and repelled it. If we bring into one view these three temptations, they represent to us the mind of Jesus as employed mainly upon one question, which the hour forced on him, and on which, as we now clearly see, the nature of his mission depended—whether he should use the method of power, or that of renunciation; whether he should assert his divine prerogative, or live in all simplicity the life of a brother man among men. We cannot doubt that in this conflict of thought in Jesus, it was the divine consciousness in him that prevailed. It is the mind of God that we have set before us in the decision of Jesus. The humility that animates it is the humility of God.

If these views are correct, they disclose a mistake often made in the study of the opening

scenes of Christ's public life; in the failure to understand the extent to which this was still to him a formative period. The old conception concerning Christ was, that from the beginning the fulness of the divine power was in him. The prevailing thought has been that expressed by Milton, in his Christmas ode, concerning his mastery over the manifold demonic powers:

Our babe to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling clothes control the damned crew.

According to this view neither the baptism nor the temptation had any important part in the subjective life of Jesus. They had little to do with any process of development taking place in his spirit. They were rather of the nature of contrivances, divinely framed to accomplish certain desirable purposes. The baptism was of the nature of an inauguration into office, with a divine certificate of the legitimacy of his kingship. The temptation was largely for scenic effect; to exhibit the hostility, from the beginning, of the prince of the kingdom of evil to Christ's work; as also to teach Christians of all time, by their Lord's own example, how to triumph over similar assaults of Satan. The thought that there could

have been any questioning in the clear soul of Jesus as to what form his mission should assume, or any conflict arising between the human and the divine consciousness in him which might need reconciliation, seems not to arise in such minds.

And yet plainly reasons might have occurred to this son of man, to whom had come a new and strange sense of the power of God residing in him, why his proper work might lie in the full display and use of this power; why this rather than a process of self-humbling might perhaps be the true significance of God's impartation to him of himself.

What thought, indeed, could be more natural at least to the human consciousness in Jesus? Power is the attribute which we most readily associate with God. The Jewish mind was especially prone to this. The national representations of God were full of it. The pictures of the Messiah abounded in it. The time also and the conditions of the national life might seem especially favorable to an exertion of power. The nation which forty years later, under the leadership of the Zealots, and after the loss of a large proportion of its wisest and best men, defended their revolt from Rome with such skill and determined valor that nothing short of the whole power of the

Roman empire was able to overcome it; what might not that people have accomplished had Jesus set up to be a conquering Messiah; supported by wisdom given him from God, and by the divine energies which he was conscious of possessing? Must we not, indeed, confess that in the light of ordinary human reason, taking all the facts into view, the arguments were strong in behalf of the method of power as against the method of self-sacrifice? Were men rebels against God? What kinder treatment of rebellion than to crush it down with a strong hand: to begin with creating an enforced submission; which in time, under the influence of a just and beneficent government, might be converted into a willing obedience? Was there anything manifestly unworthy of regard in this solution of the great problem of man's recovery? If in our time the personal coming of the Son of God, in the splendor of the divine power, seems to many the only means to reclaim the world; can we say that in that day this was a method for which a holy mind could find no arguments, and the very thought of which could be only the suggestion of the devil? This was so far from being true that we shall find repeated instances in the after-life of Jesus, in which he seems to be moved with a

profound sadness that it was not possible for him, even then, to adopt the milder ministry of power, rather than that of suffering to which he felt himself constrained.

It is evident that in the reconciliation thus effected between the divine and human consciousness in Christ, it was the divine and not the human that prevailed. The ultimate consequence involved was the form which the love of God, as revealed in the Christ-life, should assume. The form adopted was that of sympathy with men; and especially sympathy in the many and various needs with which human lives are so filled. Who can doubt that this was, indeed, a victory of the divine part in Jesus? What else was it than the spirit of God now given Jesus without measure that led that aspiring heart to regard the vision of power when it arose so fair before him, as the suggestion of the spirit of evil, and that turned his willing thoughts rather to a pathway of lowly sympathy with his unhappy brothers, ending in a suffering death in their behalf? Can we account for this in any other way as well as by believing that in this Jesus—Son of God, and Son of Man—the divine consciousness took now the supreme control; with the result that the very heart of love in God found in his life among men its complete expression?

VII

THE LOVE OF GOD

WE have studied the mental process through which Jesus, at the age of thirty, was appointed to pass preparatory to entering on his ministry. The result of this experience we have seen to be that the divine part acquired control in him, the human part being brought over to a perfect sympathy with the divine both in feeling and in purpose. Henceforth our Lord was clear regarding the nature of the work given him to do, and the manner of doing it. He was to make God's love as it was known to men. He was to do this by the method of a simple community of life with them, a divine sympathy with them in life's experiences. What we see in the brief years which follow is the carrying out of this process. The beauty and wonder of it—divinely aimed, as it was, to produce a complete communion of life between us and our Father—these form the subject of our further studies.

I shall first connect the ministry of Christ

with the work accomplished in preparation for it in the Old-Testament period, by showing the warmth of feeling for justice which Jesus displayed in that intercourse with men upon which he at once entered, and the character which this imparted to his love.

Our Lord, while he was the pure medium of heaven's love, announced himself as the appointed judge of all mankind. A judge with an imperfect sense of justice would be to our mortal eyes an anomaly indeed. A judge imbued with a profound sense of justice and yet well proven as perfect also in his love, is fitted beyond any other conceivable object to excite in us both love and reverence. It is then with a peculiar satisfaction that we mark the strength of the feeling of justice in our Lord. He did, indeed, build upon this solid foundation laid for him in the older dispensation.

1. One of the earliest proofs of this to meet us, and conspicuous to the very last days of his life among men, was his treatment of the Pharisees. If anything to be found in Christ is difficult to reconcile with the supremacy of love in him, it is, in the view of many, his severe treatment of the Pharisees. What then was the ground of his feeling toward them? It was their habitual and wicked violation of their own law, in its clear and oft-reiterated prevailing

spirit, which was justice. Our Lord did not judge the Pharisees by his law, but by their own. He said of them: "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them by their finger." It was the injustice of it that so deeply offended Jesus. These men, distinguished by their superior opportunities, and assuming to be the guides of the people in religious things, selfishly by their teachings barred the way of the mass of men to God, while opening wide the door to themselves.

2. If a sense of justice animated Christ's treatment of the Pharisees, no less was it the spring of much in his conduct toward the poor, and even toward many of the morally degraded ones who so abounded in Palestine at that day. He loved these unfortunates very tenderly. He rejoiced with a peculiar joy to win them to him, and when he had done this called them by an endeared name—his "little ones." He loved them the more because they were unfortunates — the multitudes whose chance was poor; the sick who had no physician. It was the feeling of justice in our Lord that was so deeply touched at sight of these. When so many of the wise and favored ones were throwing their chances away, should these great

swarming multitudes about him, and the greater multitudes in lands beyond, have no chance? The sense of justice in Christ swelled out in a mighty love filling his heart when he thought of these.

3. One other instance let me give of the sway of justice over the mind of Christ. I refer to the discriminations which he was in the habit of making, in connection with his invitations, concerning the grounds of the final condemnation of those who should reject his offers; as also of the acceptance or rejection in the last judgment of those who should make profession of discipleship. Concerning those rejecting him he said: "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." These are very characteristic words. Christ deeply felt the sin of men in rejecting him. He declared that this would be the ground of their condemnation, when they were brought before his bar. But he was at pains to have it clearly understood that this act became decisive of judgment against them only as it grew out of the sinful lusts which they permitted to determine their choice.

Equally clear did our Lord make it, when seeking to win disciples, that no merely out-

ward recognition of himself would avail to pass the final judgment. No words have been ever spoken that stand out in a more awful light of justice than that solemn admonition addressed to men who were eagerly, but carelessly, making their professions of service: "And then will I say unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity." Let us sum up in a word our thoughts upon this subject. Prince though he was of the kingdom of love, there was no softness in Jesus as contrary to the claims of justice. In him justice held the first place, as it does in the heart of God, as it must in all rightly constituted human beings. The Savior's love was fast fibred in this eternal rock. And yet justice itself was the occasion that Christ's feeling was wonderfully softened toward many whom ordinary mortals regarded with scant favor. Many a lesson he taught humanity by his treatment of these unfortunates, bond servants though they often were of Satan. Many a false human judgment was thus reversed by him, out of the simpler and purer love of justice in his heart.

But if it is needful for us to understand the great importance of justice to Christ, it is even more needful, for it touches more nearly the especial object of his mission to our earth, that we see how foreign to his whole nature mere

justice was. He made this fact as clear from the beginning as words could make it.

The most signal of all the proofs of this is our Lord's doctrine of the treatment of enemies. In contrast with the Jewish law, and in direct contradiction with the prevailing national feeling growing out of that law, Jesus taught his followers to exercise toward their enemies that love which in his perfect sympathy with God he saw to be the law governing the divine activity. This our Lord informs us is the true perfection; and it is this which he lays upon us in the command: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." He had been treating of God's love even to the unjust; his conclusion is, let your perfection be like unto his.

In one peculiarly delightful teaching of Jesus, the parable of the prodigal son, he sets God before us expressly in the love he feels toward his children who have wandered away into disobedience. The great Father is represented here as desiring above all things for his erring children that they return repentant to him, and as welcoming them when they do come with all the rejoicings of heaven. The family itself is made, indeed, by Christ the type of the heavenly kingdom — the kingdom of eternal love. And here we can but admire the

preparation made in Judaism for the work of Christ by the sacred importance with which it invested the family. In this narrower sphere the Jews had already learned much that could be turned over to the service of heavenly love; nor was it a difficult thing for the true-hearted among them to transfer their affection from the earthly home to that more blessed household of faith of which Christ was the ever-living head. The most delightful feature of a true home is its pure companionship— a fact unhappily in too many cases overlooked. It is an especially serious thing to fail to apprehend this as true concerning the heavenly home. There we may, indeed, look to see fulfilled this sweetest possible form of fellowship. When Professor Clifford, compelled by the requirements of the atheistic philosophy he had embraced, exclaimed, "The great companion is dead," he spoke out of the consciousness of a truth so high and pure that the faithful witness of his own heart ought to have forbidden his ever abandoning it.

We need to bear distinctly in mind in all the discussion of this subject, that love can have no claim upon obedience, any more than justice can, save as it is the demand of the divine righteousness. There can be but one basis of obligation, and that is right. Our Lord made

as much of the word righteousness as Moses did. He fully accepted it. Justice was rooted in right, and was loved by Jesus for this reason. The same thing was equally true of love. To have understood and accepted one of these forms of right was to be prepared to receive the other. Well might the great teacher desire to see in his disciples a righteousness that should exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; the very hope of humanity lay, to his mind, in this.

The fact that love is a form of righteousness and invested to the full with the obligation of right, teaches us important truths concerning God's love to us in Christ. It teaches us this especially; that behind the love which led God to send his Son to be our Savior, must have been the obligation of right requiring love to fulfil its sacred office. We cannot "find out the Almighty to perfection," nor do we assume to judge his acts, but we are compelled by what we know of his character to believe that he feels himself under the obligation of love to the sinful children of our race. Our hearts tell us that he has made them for a life with him. If so he surely cannot suffer that they fall short of a real and full chance to live that life. He is their Father and cannot cut them wholly off because they have become involved in

ignorance, and are led captive by the powers of evil. Rather will his perfect righteousness oblige him to seek these lost ones—lost from their natural home, their Father's house—and win them back if possible. Only when all means to this have failed can we believe that love's obligation, or the obligation even of justice in the larger meaning of that word, ceases.

My words will be resented by those whose doctrine of God is, that his love to sinners, and even to sinners who through repentance have become obedient and loving children, is not at all of obligation, but wholly of grace. It is, indeed, of grace; but we greatly need, when we use that word, to take account of what it means. Grace is essentially a word of magnitude; they mistake who conceive it to be chiefly a word of quality. Grace is the favor of God (and to that extent we do, indeed, recognize it as a word of quality), considered in the boundlessness of its extent; flowing out absolutely free from all limitation of whatever sort. It can no more be measured than can the ether. It pervades the universe. It is so large and full that sin and ingratitude are not obstacles to it, if by overflowing them it can sweep them away. It is so plenteous and free that it assumes by its own potency every finer

form, every rarer form, of delicacy or beauty possible for love to take. Man has no standards by which the grace of God can be measured; and least of all any standards of personal desert. Does a true heart, when its blessings overflow, cry out: "I am properly paid now for my service of love"? It cries out rather: "Blessed is my lot, that God, the Infinite, is love; and that on me, since I am his child, the infinity of his love is poured out." The Christian, then, does not feel God's goodness to him to be a matter of obligation, but wholly of grace; and he rejoices with all saints and the angels of heaven that it is.

But who can think otherwise than that God's sense of obligation to himself requires of him this grace? If he be a moral being he must have his own feeling of what things are right for him to do; if he be a righteous being he must have the feeling of the obligations of his righteousness. We cannot conceive otherwise than this. And this feeling of the obligation of his righteousness is in God the feeling of what he owes to his own perfections—his obligation to himself to be God. We reach here the highest of all thoughts in the moral sphere possible to any mind; we reach the utmost possible of moral sublimity. This much, then, concerning the righteousness of God in its

highest form as revealed to us by Jesus, that of love. This much concerning the place which the law of love holds in God's government of his universe.

VIII

MAN'S ONLY PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS IS LOVE

AMONG the sayings of Christ was this: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Not as perfect as God, but perfect in the way God is. The object sought in this chapter is to show what forms love must take in man, to become the fulfilment of this command.

The question divides itself into two: what men owe to God himself in return for his perfect love to them, and what they owe to one another in the various relations of life.

1. It is evident that the immeasurable love of God, if it were strictly repaid by the rule of justice, would require in man also an immeasurable love—a thing impossible to him, since he is finite and incapable of rendering such a love. One consequence of this is that the old idea of obligation to God as a thing to be measured and disposed of in terms of obedience and disobedience, and their exact appropriate rewards,

disappears now altogether. It may be added that with it disappear also the forms of a chiefly legal obedience, and that purely mundane character of the divine rewards and punishments which prevailed among the Jews. With the passing of this idea there arose also a new conception of what it is to live our life in this world. As Christ saw the good of life, it consisted no longer chiefly, as it did among the Jews, in the enjoyment of earthly blessings through the favor of Jehovah; it was the enjoyment of God himself; it was the being admitted to a life of full and all blessed communion with him.

This was, as Christ clearly conceived it, a mutual relation—wherein, in the nature of things, alone a true communion can exist. It was our having, as God's children, a heavenly Father; it was his being blessed, as a Father, with happy and loving children. This mutual and mutually blessed relation Christ clearly saw to be God's end in the creation of the human race. His great peculiarity as a thinker, the one principal addition which he made to human knowledge, lay in his clear comprehension of that truth. His consummate mission to our race was in the fact that he came to secure the accomplishment of that end.

Men often find a difficulty in conceiving with

exactness the nature of God's love to them. Is it chiefly benevolence, or the love of the happiness of others? Is it benevolence taking on the forms that adapt it especially to the case of the unfortunate and sinful — pity for their sufferings, mercy for their offences? Does it reach in the case of some to the height of complacency; that is to a pleasurable feeling toward them, and the enjoyment of their traits; and is this what the great Father seeks ultimately to secure in the case of all? Now there is plainly a love possible to God, different from all of these; and which I may venture to call the love of mutuality—by which is meant the participation which it is given souls to have with one another in the satisfaction of a mutual sympathy, a life in common. We are taught by Christ that it is our heavenly Father's longing, as regards his children of our race, to live with us in such a fellowship of love as this; and that he gave his eternal Son to the end of bringing such a love to pass between us and him. If this be so then plainly our main duty is to open our hearts freely to God, and, as we are his children, to be true children; letting our heavenly Father into our lives in a sincerely filial spirit; entering gladly also into sympathy with him in his thoughts and feelings, in so far as his grace permits us to do so. Our Lord him-

self said: "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from the Father I have made known to you." So freely does God open his heart to us; so high is it given us to aspire! It seems, indeed, to be true, that so far as our heavenly Father's part is concerned, the love of mutuality is complete between him and us. This is the case both as regards his readiness on the one hand to enter into our lives; sharing with us our happiness and possibilities of happiness; our woes and potentialities of still profounder woe; and on the other as regards his openness to receive us into his life; and to make us partakers in the things that constitute its perfect blessedness.

How changed a thing the Christian life of most of us would be, if the possibilities of this high communion between the great Father and ourselves, on both its sides, were made in some good measure real in our experience! How many of us are there who let God into our lives, in that fulness of sympathy with us in everything, which he is so ready to give—business, successes, mistakes, life sorrows, life enjoyments? And still more how many of us who enter into such a sympathy with his thoughts in everything—his material world;

his children living on it; his high and wonderful plans for ourselves; his plans for our friends, neighbors, country, the world, the world to come, the worlds to come; the lengths, heights, depths of love in his heart; the all in all in him —which it is permitted us even here at least to begin to enjoy?

2. It still remains to ask what it is that righteousness requires of us in our treatment of our neighbor under the law of love. It is evident, as we have seen, that love differs essentially from justice, in that it not only avoids injuring our neighbor's welfare, but enters into his life as a positive force to help it on. It follows that the welfare of others becomes, under the rule of love, a personal interest of our own; it takes rank side by side with our own, as being of equal value. We need especially to remark that the parallel, strictly speaking, is not here between persons, and the relative importance to us of our neighbor and ourselves; it is between two emotions of love in our hearts —our love to ourselves and our love to our neighbor. The claim is that these two affections should be equal in us; and equally a source of happiness. The command that we love our neighbor as ourselves does not in any way depreciate the love we bear ourselves;

but rather recognizes the exceedingly weighty character of that love. The very point and force of the command turn upon this fact. Our love to ourselves is the standard. Not less than this, but its equal, its counterpart, shall be our love to our neighbor. The question of the possibility of our really loving our neighbor as ourselves may still be with many a difficult one. The writer has found it to be such with some very sensible and right-minded people. The question is essentially one of motive, and we have seen that only some feeling can in the nature of things be a motive. I believe it to be in the power of a human will, acting under the stimulus of very high, or, on the other hand, of very base feelings, to reinforce those feelings; imparting to them as motives a weight beyond their unassisted value. I believe that a man may pass, through his will force, beyond his merely natural self in such a case, and that the spirit of all good (as also probably the spirit of all evil) is ready at hand to help him. Whichever spirit he gives himself over to, of that spirit he will have the help.

Thus it happens that in a multitude of men who have become deeply imbued with the spirit of Christ, the generous part in them, the part that prefers the happiness of others, when the choice is between that and their own, becomes

predominant; and the command to love their neighbor as themselves, so far from being a great stretch of virtue, proves to have become in them an habitual law of action; a thing of course.

Even in such this rule will necessarily hold in a difference of working and a difference of degree. Should it be true of our neighbor, for instance, that by reason of his traits of character, or habits of life, we find him personally uncongenial; his happiness is still an object which may have the utmost value to us. If his lot is hard, with many obstacles in the way of his good fortune, this may make that interest an object of still greater desire to us. If his character is bad, his happiness of an inferior sort, and the prospect of his future a dark one; to redeem it from its wretchedness, and set it beside our own in fellowship with the things of heaven and God, may be one of the highest joys which even a spirit of heaven could taste. If already heavenly love and pure tastes fill this heart, then the joy to be had in becoming a partaker in its life may be of the nature of the highest blessedness known to God, or in his power to provide for his creatures.

We see, then, clearly the wide scope of the doctrine of love as Christ conceived it and taught it, and especially as he lived it out

among men. This doctrine is very closely connected with our Lord's teaching of what it is to live our own life, and a true child of the kingdom cannot separate the one from the other.

Many attempts are made in our day to contrive some method of men's living together with an equal regard for each other's interests, independently of Christ's philosophical basis of such a life. The altruistic idea—that is, the idea of holding the welfare of others as equal to our own—is taken up and exploited before us, by various sorts of people, after every possible fashion. But, so long as the conception of the best good for man is unlimited bread and butter, together with the greatest possible amount of leisure to enjoy these; or supposing tastes to have become more elevated, pictures and equipage and travel and culture, with the altruistic spirit so developed that by general consent all shall be made to share in these—so long as the true life of man is held to be chiefly such as this, the altruistic theory is likely to meet with insuperable obstacles to its execution. For the possible supply of these outward gifts of life is limited, and especially if it be supposed that leisure to enjoy them, and therefore the minimum of labor to create them,

is essential to the proper working of the scheme.

But the desire of these things has proved itself a thousand times, and is in the very nature of things, unlimited. The possession of these things, therefore, by one clashes with the desire of them in another. The infinite in man is against the success of such a scheme—that infinite in man which will never be satisfied with any limited supply of good.

The philosophy of Christ escapes this danger. God's thoughts are infinite; his spiritual supplies are infinite in extent and free to all. It is, therefore, when we attain to these larger satisfactions, and taste their fulness of life, that all comes into harmony. There is abundance here to satisfy all. Each may take freely, and find life in plenty. And each in so doing helps and in no wise hinders every other; for each becomes thereby a new and separate source of supply at which the passer-by may replenish his store.

It is still true, and should be taken distinctly into account, that as humanity advances on its upward pathway the possession of a fair amount of the things of the lower earthly life seems increasingly necessary to high attainments in the spiritual life. Excessive poverty is practically as great a hindrance as even

excessive wealth to such attainments. Nor does any way appear by which love acting alone can make good this disparity. For it is the apparently inevitable tendency of love acting alone in such a case to become the love of benevolence merely; but experience shows that mere benevolence, or desire of the happiness of others, though acting sincerely, may, in the bestowment of its bounties, create evils that largely counterbalance the indisputable good, which often, as things now are, can be accomplished in no other way. Among these evils one is that of arousing in independent minds a feeling of rebellion against the hard necessity which compels them to accept so distasteful a means of supporting life. The apparent want of gratitude in such cases may easily excite a feeling of repulsion in the giver, and of contempt for such a seeming poverty of good in human nature. If, on the other hand, the recipient yields himself too easily to receive proffered aid, his want of independence not only becomes a reproach, but is likely to grow into a most harmful lack of energy, and shameful subservience to others for the procurement of the goods of life. Of the two the latter is by far the greater evil and sufficient of itself to stamp with condemnation the kindness that produces such fruit.

These evils are greatly lessened when the love employed rises from this lower grade to love's highest level of all, that of mutuality. Whoever helps his needy neighbor, taking for his own whatever good there be in the neighbor, and making him free partaker also in whatever is best in himself, will submit to any sacrifice, that even of putting constraint upon his own natural kindliness, to guard against his neighbor's being injured by his kindness. The care, therefore, enjoined on us by advanced thinkers to guard against pauperizing the very poor by the help we give them, is right and proper, and brings us into the likeness of Christ, provided we guard this care itself, that it become not tainted with indifference.

But the best virtue of all in this higher love is that it tends to lift justice itself out of the narrowness that characterizes its earlier manifestations into the larger thing which in its nature it is intended and fitted to become. We have seen the unselfishness which animates justice even in those earlier forms. This makes it, by a force inherent in it, love's ally. But love is also naturally the ally of justice, and the field of what is identical in the action of the two tends constantly to enlargement. The history of the advancement in the past of

men's life together, is sufficient proof of this. The most signal of all proofs of genuineness in any civilization is its power to convert what were once (when they existed at all) concessions of love into unquestioned rights in justice itself. The abolition of servitude, the emancipation of woman, the right to govern themselves of all peoples who are capable of it, the right of all peoples to treatment by those who rule over them suited to render them capable of self-government as soon as possible—these, with a multitude of other enrichments of humanity's life already in great measure secured, are rights held in pure justice. They are, in other words, true human rights; not concessions merely of some ruling power which has indulged itself for a time in the exercise of a kindly feeling free from the control of higher principles.

When the rightful domain of justice has been thus enlarged under the concurrent influence of its great and natural ally, the love of mutuality, many great and pressing questions will be carried far on toward their solution. For instance, little difficulty will be left in determining what share of the profits of any business enterprise shall be allotted to the different partners uniting in its accomplishment. It will be not mere justice, but the larger justice,

which will then apportion to the laborers in such an enterprise (the laborers as distinguished from those in higher control) a share commensurate with the expenditure of pure life-energy which they have contributed to it. This rather than the exact money-value, carefully computed, of their work, will have become then the standard of apportionment. This means that their intelligence in the putting forth of their work, their diligence in pursuing it, and, best of all, their faithfulness to the true ends sought in the work shall have become recognized elements of value in its products. There must be first, of course, a public opinion demanding this. But are there not signs already pointing to the rise of such a public opinion? We spend our money for the advancement, in one way or another, of our lives, and it is easy for the most of us to take little thought, and count that best which, serving our need, can be cheapest bought. But is the day never coming when our full enjoyment of the things we buy, whether a garment, or a journey, or a house to live in, or any other article of supposed value, shall be dependent on a reasonable assurance that it is a means of true life also to those whose toil provided it for us? When this feeling becomes strong enough in us it will certainly prevail also in those who control

production for us. Self-interest alone would require this of them. Right feeling in them will also contribute its full share. But why do I say right feeling, and why does the reader accept that term, unless it be, indeed, a question of right? It is evidently such a question —a question of right in the primary and exceedingly sacred form of justice, or the demand that in our pursuit of the things making for us a life we shall deprive no brother man of the means of living properly belonging to him.

Let us then hope that justice is, indeed, treading an ascending pathway on the earth, and that, as the ages pass, its goal will be ever coming nearer into sight. In God the highest love is only justice to himself and the creatures he has made. What else then can be our ultimate destiny, save that we attain in him at last to a perfection of life, in which the boundaries between justice and love shall have become indistinguishable?

IX

THE NEW MAN

If it be true that the right return for man to make to God for his love is to accept it in a filial spirit, it becomes an important problem how he can be brought into the exercise of that spirit. Our Lord gives two answers to that question, and these two answers taken together set before us the redemptive process in its fundamental elements — they are faith and the new birth. The former of these represents the process as originating in man's initiative, the other in that of God. These belong together, their combined activity being essential from the outset to any true renewal of the spiritual life in man.

We have before us first the truth that a child of God estranged from him by sin begins to exercise the right, or filial, spirit towards him by having faith in Christ. In discussing the philosophical nature of faith in the first part of this book, I spoke of it as distinguished among our mental states by the fact that it expresses

the assent of our whole being, rather than that of some one or more portions of our being—whether intellect, feeling, will, or, I might add, the imagination. Faith was treated in that chapter chiefly in its subjective nature, though the fact was recognized that no faith could be truly great that had not some great moral object, God himself being in the nature of things the supreme object of that faith.

According to the teaching of Christ, faith in himself is the condition of salvation. Many have been the attempts to define the inner, deepest nature of this faith. The question is one of very great importance; for this faith, by which the soul becomes the disciple of Christ, or receives him as its savior, must itself be the beginning in that soul of its salvation, the spirit which in its unfolding will become its full salvation. Is, then, this faith chiefly the action of the heart trusting itself to Christ to be saved, as so many believe? Or is it rather the action of the intellect accepting Christ as a divine teacher, which many others confidently affirm? Or is faith in its profounder essence the soul's choice, yielding up its personal will to make the higher demands of right and God its own? How much has been written and said upon these great questions, and how much in terms of very

earnest controversy; when, by the very nature of the case, each of these modes of the soul's assent must exist in order that a faith worthy of the name may be present at all! In my own view the presence of no one of these existing in any high measure of perfection marks the beginning of salvation in the soul, and still less the presence of all of them together. For these are spiritual exercises far too high for a poor sinner, coming often in extreme ignorance and degradation, to be able to put forth.

But what does characterize him, and what seems to have been always the heart of desire in Christ for men, was a spirit open in its entire being to receive illuminating and gracious influence from God—open to know and love and do the truth, as the Savior given to be the world's light reveals it. Thus our Lord on one occasion said, and he said it both as an invitation to the true-hearted and as a word of counsel concerning the spirit in which men ought to listen to him: "Whosoever willeth to do his will, shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." That which he most wanted to see in his disciples was the desire to know the right as God sees it, united with the purpose to do it when it was known.

A characteristic saying was this, peculiar as

was so often true of him: "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." This means that God will fill with his light the spirit that is in health, unimpaired in its aim, open to him. The sermon on the mount, which is without express direction on the subject of faith, abounds in sayings like the above, requiring the spirit characteristic of faith. The apostle John also grasped this interior and vital truth, when he said—and there is nowhere in the bible a clearer statement of the nature of faith: "As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." Here faith is represented as receiving Christ. The two are declared to be identical. Those who receive him, that is who open mind and heart to him as their Savior, these it is that believe on him. And these are owned by God as his children, a fact indicating clearly that they have the filial spirit. Now we all know what a true filial spirit is; it is the response made to the love of parents by a spirit open to be influenced by them, and sincerely desirous to meet their wishes.

Faith, then, as our Lord represented it, is in its main essence a condition of the spirit such that it can be moved upon by God, and it is wonderful how almost solely important this

grace in his disciples seemed to Christ to be. Jesus is distinguished among the world's great teachers by the small stress he laid on the ordinary human virtues. These were not directly the object of his endeavor. He desired to see a certain spirit in his disciples. This spirit he called faith, which in its essence was openness towards God; and in its practical working trust in himself, the Son of God, come to teach and save men.

It is clear in the light of these thoughts what the foundation is of that essential Christian doctrine, justification by faith. It was St. Paul to whom it was given to develop this doctrine; partly in forms of universal application, as when he illustrated the principle of faith by the example of Abraham; but chiefly in the form of opposition to the Jewish ceremonial law. Our Lord must have had the same truth in mind when he spoke of a righteousness which he looked to see from his disciples that should exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Faith was doubtless that righteousness —the truly filial spirit toward God. This spirit, for our greater clearness of apprehension, and ease of access, and comfort of hope, and motive power of love, we are permitted to exercise toward God as he comes near to us in Christ, and it is accepted by God as our righteousness

because it is the right and only right spirit for those in our condition to have; it is the true spirit for children of God that have been unfaithful and disobedient to have. But it is not right in the sense of being an entirely righteous spirit, for this is a thing beyond the power of the greater part of men, probably of all men, to attain in the present stage of our existence: it is right because it has in it the promise of that condition, and is in fact the first stage of a soul's progress towards it.

Our Lord abounded much in a style of teaching admirably adapted to explain the precise stage which faith holds in the progress of a soul toward a complete righteousness. I refer to those teachings in which he likens the kingdom of heaven in the world, not to earthly kingdoms, composed of a great community of human beings bound together by statute laws, and rendering allegiance to one whom they recognize as their ruler, but rather to the kingdoms of life in nature, governed by the eternal mysterious laws of life.

This thought of Christ's is especially noticeable in his sayings that bear on the preparation in the heart—the preparation of faith—for the reception of his truth. Thus in the parable of the sower he likens the word of the kingdom, as it falls on a spirit prepared to receive it, to

a seed which the sower casts into good ground. As a seed in such case takes root, and grows, and brings forth abundant fruit, so does the word of the kingdom spring to life, and grow to the fulness of a prosperous harvest in such a heart. There is needed then a preparation of heart to receive the gospel, as truly as of the soil to receive the seed. This preparation is faith—or a spirit open to the divine influence.

In another parable Jesus describes the manner of our spiritual growth by likening it to leaven which a woman took and hid in two measures of meal till the whole was leavened. This most felicitous illustration also, as we have now learned, is drawn from the kingdom of vegetable life. What is leaven but a living vegetable germ, growing with wonderful rapidity, under favorable conditions of warmth and moisture, in a soil well prepared to receive it?

Jesus had no confidence that there could be any genuine spiritual life in men save as it was nourished by the inflowing of the divine life. Christ's whole life as it was pictured in the synoptical gospels was attuned to this truth, but it was left to the apostle John to report the teachings of Christ that most expressly declare it. After the Savior's death this truth became a pervasive element in the teaching of all the apostles, and has been

accepted by the church in all ages since as fundamental among it doctrines. There is no greater single witness to the authenticity of John's gospel than this.

As reported by John, Jesus early in his ministry announced to Nicodemus—one who by reason of his superior education might be supposed fitted to receive such a truth — that "Except a man be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God," and he added, by way of explanation: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Jesus nowhere used material substances—such as water for cleansing, or bread for nourishment—with the idea that there is any direct efficacy in these things, natural or imparted, to produce spiritual results. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," was his consistent teaching. We must suppose, therefore, that the expression "born of water" means formed anew from out a depraved into a cleansed nature. Of this water was a significant symbol, but the agency in this change—other than that of the Divine Spirit—could only be the man's own spirit, opening itself to God to be moved upon henceforth by him. In this process God's spirit must needs be actively present, since all good in souls is from him, while the attitude toward God assumed

in faith, makes it sure that for the future the Holy Spirit will direct and control the life.

We have seen that Christ supposed the spirit of God to be so vitally present and active in his own spirit that he failed to distinguish in his thought between the two. His taking on himself to pardon repentant souls, and to justify those who had faith in him is proof of this. The natural way in which he undertook to supply all the spiritual needs of such as would come to him is another proof. Very beautiful, on the other hand, was the perfection of his confidence that there was that in the human soul which could respond to the gracious influence of this spirit residing in him. There was good soil in man. His heart was a soil in which the seed of the kingdom could grow. The parable of the leaven assumed this. So did the parable of the sower, and of the wheat and the tares, as also did the saying concerning the earth bringing forth fruit of herself.

It is evident that the growth of the germ-principles, whether of right feeling, or of divine truth implanted in us by the Holy Spirit, must in the nature of things be slow in coming to maturity. How relatively small is the implanted germ of leaven; nevertheless when the slow-creeping hours are accomplished, the patient house-wife finds the needed work done. So in

souls we must be patient and willing to wait for the completion of the Spirit's work. So still more in the larger world-work of the Holy Spirit—pictured by Christ in the parable that tells how the tiniest of seeds unfolds in time into the greatest of herbs, so that the birds of heaven could lodge in it—we must be willing to work after his own fashion of working.

Most important is it for us ever to bear in mind this slowness of movement in the life processes that go on in the soul. Even in the many cases in which a heart seems, by means of a holy purpose formed at a definite moment, to enter at that moment into life, who can tell what seeds of truth dropped into the mind long years before may have maintained some sort of vitality in them through the action of the Holy Spirit, or even what holier desires may have lived a latent life in them from the earliest beginnings of the consciousness of existence and of duty?

"He that believeth shall not make haste." There are many sayings of Christ in harmony with this profound Old-Testament saying concerning workers with God.

X

LAWS OF GOD'S KINGDOM

OUR principal business in the remainder of this book will be an examination of the more prominent forms which the divine righteousness assumed when brought into contact, in the person of the Son of God, with the human race in its condition of disobedience and sinfulness. This is in effect to say that our study is to be of the *laws* of the "kingdom of God," as they are revealed in the teachings of Christ, and his bearing toward sin. As preliminary to the study of this question, it is important that we have clearly in mind the meaning of the term law in general, and of the laws of the kingdom of God in particular. In order to this it is necessary to discriminate between the laws of the natural and the moral worlds of God, which, while they are clearly distinct, have still many features in common.

Before man's coming there was none but natural law in the world. This does not mean that the world's unfolding was without regard

to man; it would be truer to say that it was entirely in his interest. This at least all must think who believe that God's chief end in creation was the intelligent beings who should people the world. It would be too much absolutely to affirm that until man's appearance on the stage there were no departures from that fixed sequence of phenomena (the conditions being the same) in which natural law, for want of a more exact philosophical knowledge of it, is now generally defined as consisting. Even at this remote period, in the interest of the destined head of the race whose time was surely approaching, it cannot be denied that there may have been direct interventions of the divine agency.

1. The evidence thus far attainable is fully consistent with the thought that the beginning of life on our planet was very probably brought about by this means, there being no known instance in the world's history of life being produced except from antecedent life. Previous to this time it is difficult to see what necessity there could have been for divine interpositions. In the earlier ongoing of a simply material world, and its unfolding from stage to stage of its progress, there seems no reason why the eternal plan of God, sustained by his ever-present power, should not have been sufficient

to every required purpose. The beginning of the mysterious principle of life is a thing of another sort; it is a thing of a diviner sort; nearer to God's own being. Men speak of the ever-living God; but they cannot speak of an ever-living universe of matter. We know it not to be ever-living, but at the most sometimes living; and whenever it has risen from the condition of dead matter to the infinitely higher stage indicated by the word life, there can be no proof that the eternal life-giving Spirit did not breathe directly upon it, or within it, to bid it live.

2. But it is clear that conscious life, as of the animal in distinction from the vegetable creation, is a thing still higher; for with this happiness is born into existence. In the widest generalization happiness is the end of all being. The question of the supreme happiness, which must ever be the ultimate happiness sought in an ordered world, while more important, is logically a narrower one. All that is asserted now is that a world, while still without the existence in it of happiness, is without true value, unless, indeed, its end be the merely subsidiary one of causing happiness by its far-off splendors to the inhabitants of some other world. What we conceive as true, then, when life came into being, we may more easily

believe to have been true when conscious life was seen appearing. We may naturally conceive of it as the immediate product of the eternal life-giving spirit.

3. Self-conscious living beings are at a still greater advance beyond those possessed only of consciousness. Such have not merely the feeling of certain sensations,—hunger, thirst, fear, joy, a multitude of others,—but they are conscious also of themselves; they have the distinct conception: "It is I that experience these varying sensations; I in distinction from other beings about me." This higher form of consciousness becomes the basis upon which a great variety of mental processes, otherwise impossible, can be carried on. There now arises what can, indeed, be called a mind; as also a distinct and separate personality. Simple perceptions, simple acts of intelligence, memory, and will, such as a mere animal is capable of, can in such a person be compared with one another. The mind of one such being will also contrive improved methods of communicating with other minds. By means of such mental processes reason will come to its birth. In its proper order also the kindred feeling, "I ought," will become a part of the mind's furnishing.

It has become apparent, with the progress of

time, that no other of the operative forces that shape the life of our world compares in its power with this feeling of duty. Few, indeed, among men are wholly destitute of it. It is so truly a distinguishing trait of humanity, that to be wholly without it would be to place one outside of humanity's pale. It is capable beyond most traits of being awakened in those in whom its power by nature seems to be feeble —a fact especially evidenced when such hearts are acted upon by the Holy Spirit. A character marked by a profound sense of moral obligation not only excites universal respect and sympathy, but is the one thing capable of doing this to the full. Man's nature is plainly attuned to right as its supreme principle. Genius commands respect and the power of mastery over other men commands admiration and fear; but the presence in any human being of an exalted sense of obligation, especially when united with a clear perception of what things are worthiest to be the objects of pursuit by such a spirit, this commands undying reverence and love. This in the end conquers the minds of men and controls the world's progress. Nothing is settled in this world until it is brought into accordance with the principle of right. A thousand things are settled. The world is stable compared with what it once

was. In the midst of activities so immense, changes so frequent and vast, seeming confusion so great, the principle of order in the life of men together, and in consequence a settled condition of life, is coming more and more to prevail. And this is because the laws of the moral universe are coming to be increasingly recognized and obeyed.

The change here, then, is the greatest of all; the length of the upward stretch and the difference effected in the world's condition is the greatest. The world's value has become infinitely enhanced. A veritable upward leap is now made toward God, for the possibility of a real communion with him now arises; the end sought by him comes fully into sight. If, then, in the other cases, there was reason to believe that the occasion was such as might justify a direct interposition of God, here the probability of such an interposition seems the greatest of all.

Thus much has been said to show that the uniform action of natural phenomena, essential as it is to any true world-order, is not regarded as incompatible with any possible direct interpositions of the Infinite Spirit that dwells in nature. It should, however, be conceded in claiming this, that there are Christian thinkers —and Professor Drummond appears to be one

of them—who think that all the seeming gaps in the unfolding of the world down to the production of man himself may have been filled out, without special divine interpositions, under the regular and normal operation of its laws. This may, indeed, be possible and God still in and over all, if we suppose his Spirit to have been ever present in the world, and operative in the maintenance of its laws. This would be possibly consistent also with the appearance of man upon the stage under natural law; only here the regular and normal action of the Spirit would become the action of the Holy Spirit, as we shall see later.

Coming now to the exact question, what the relation is in which the laws of the moral world stand to those of the natural world; and to the more definite question, what is meant when we speak of the laws of the kingdom of Christ among men; it will suffice for our purpose to mark the following points:

(1) The moral laws, like the natural laws, we have reason to believe, are of universal validity in all the worlds of being.

(2) In the moral realm the operation of the forces appropriate to maintain its order is invariably the same, under like conditions. If I may apply here the phraseology of science, the phenomena of right are invariable in cases

where conditions are the same, even as the phenomena are in nature.

(3) As the knowledge of the law of nature is obtained by the exact observation of its phenomenal modes of action, so the knowledge of the moral laws of the universe is best obtained by the clear perception of the forms which right action assumes, when that action is normal and undisturbed.

(4) The laws of the moral universe differ from those of the natural world chiefly in the respect that while in the latter no person is present to hinder their proper action—God's will in that sphere being undisturbed,—in the former the free will residing in every man can, and as a rule does, set itself against the eternal will.

(5) Hence an infinite variety of cases arising in the moral world, which, while they can in many particulars be cared for under the general methods which the system provides, give occasion nevertheless, in order to their proper treatment, for individual oversight and influence, of a kind and to an extent not known in the natural world. This, which is the eternal need of finite spirits, is met in our world, as probably in all worlds, by the everywhere present and active agency of the Holy Spirit. This is the one greatest truth of God's moral government in his universe. It was especially empha-

sized by Christ in his kingdom. Affirmed constantly in scripture, and reaffirmed in the Christian consciousness, the presupposition of our reason is also favorable to it.

(6) We have seen that, viewed in the light of pure science, this is certainly true of it; the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a doctrine of the supernatural; but if we could view it in the broader light of the complete worlds of God, and his universal kingdom, it would doubtless seem to us the most natural of all conceivable things.

One thought more will finish the examination undertaken in this chapter. We believe that it was given our Lord Christ to unfold before our eyes, by his words and his acts, the righteousness of God—especially that it was given him to display perfect justice and perfect love, as they are in their essential nature wherever in the universe they find exercise. In no merely human life could these laws of the moral universe have been perfectly revealed; humanity is not near enough to God for this. But in Christ, in whom it is given us to see the life of God himself lived out before us under human conditions, we believe that we have this knowledge in perfection. It is evidently the simple and ordinary laws of the moral universe of God which our Lord thus expresses. It is possible to conceive of him as having laid down for us a

series of statute enactments, or of laws specially adapted to our case, corresponding to what are called statute enactments among men. It has often happened that views of the divine government widely received by Christians have erred by reason of the prominence given this supposed fact. If any are disposed to regard the laws laid down by Christ as statute enactments, they ought to bear ever in mind that these must be, and are, still in absolute harmony with the natural laws of right in God's universe. It is a narrow view of God to suppose that this world is an exception to his ordinary methods in his treatment of his creatures. Especially does it need to be said that there could be no greater injustice to God than to suppose that his love in Christ is something extraordinary, or a stretch of love such as is unknown elsewhere. However wonderful to us it is and can only be, in the larger view it is simply a normal movement of the divine heart. God changes not; he is always God. He can no more surpass himself than he can fall below himself. Every world of his intelligent creatures must have its own experience of his perfect goodness. It is given to us to be shown the nature of perfect goodness as we see it passing before our eyes in the life, and equally in the death, of our divine Lord.

XI

JUDGMENT

RETRIBUTION is one of the inviolable principles in the natural world. Earth's forces must operate uniformly. A world-order is the necessary antecedent condition of a world. Law is the word expressing this uniformity in the action of the world's forces, and retribution is simply their mode of operation when one force is prevented from acting freely by the antagonism of another force. The word has no peculiar significance until conscious life appears. It is when animals appear that the world begins to have significance. The happiness of animals depends upon their ability to accommodate themselves to the unvarying order of the world. So far as they fail to do this and receive injury as the result, they suffer what is properly called the retribution of violated law. The word by its very derivation implies, and implies truly, that the evil they suffer is rendered back to them under law as the natural consequence of their own act.

This does not in any sense imply wrong-doing on their part, nor can they know any sense of ill-desert. Not being possessed of self-consciousness, they do not even think clearly of the action as theirs, nor do they impute to themselves blame on its account. The retribution, therefore, is in no true sense punishment; when it is so spoken of, it is in a figurative sense. An animal follows his instincts, and if in the effort to escape an enemy, or to appease an appetite, he miscalculate his ability to leap over a chasm and is dashed into it, his death that follows is in its essential character the natural consequence of an innocent mistake.

The vast amount of happiness created by the introduction of conscious but not self-conscious beings into the life of our earth is but little diminished by their sufferings. These sufferings are seldom prolonged, seldom actively felt, not increased by anticipation, nor followed by remorse, nor intensified by the fear of judgments to come. The animal world, except when cursed by inhumanity in man, is a happy world. Our earth with only one swarm of insects upon it, hovering over flowers in the enjoyment of the light and warmth of the sun, and propagating their kind capable of the same happiness, would be at a truly vast advance over what it was before that insect swarm

came into being. Now happiness has begun to exist upon it, and minds acquainted with God's ways can see in this a sure portent of more abundant happiness to follow.

In the case of man this higher happiness is abundantly realized in the use of those intelligent and free choices, and the affections and pursuits consequent upon them, in which his manhood consists. For these choices he is responsible. Retribution, therefore, in his case takes on a new form, that of punishment. Judgment, and judgment approved by his own conscience, is laid up against him if he transgresses. In considering what the perfect judgment of God against sin is, as revealed by Christ, it needs to be borne in mind that, even though we may prefer to regard his laws as statute laws, their punishments cannot be otherwise than in perfect harmony with the everywhere natural and necessary retributions of God's moral universe.

1. All students of our Lord's life must know how much he makes of individual responsibility. He assumes that every man is directly responsible to God, owing him both personal love and faithful service in his kingdom. His calls to faith in God are based on this principle. Many of the parables—as those of the pounds and the talents—derive all their force from it.

Guilt and remorse are natural accompaniments of this teaching, and it is evident that Jesus had a profound feeling of their reality. This was one element in the punishment rendered back to him who violated the law of the kingdom; it was a part of retribution. It is now generally conceded that "the worm that dieth not" which characterizes the state of the lost in eternity, is the gnawing of conscience under the sense of guilt and remorse. In a very vivid picture drawn by our Lord of the condemnation incurred as the penalty of a life spent in the selfish enjoyment of wealth, this feature is forcibly portrayed. In a hell of remorse (tormented by flames) Dives awakes to all he has so wickedly thrown away, and begs that his brethren may be warned in time, lest they also come to this place of torment. The element of doom so vividly brought out in this parable is not the sense of the displeasure of heaven, for the soul of goodness in Father Abraham is still kindly toward the offender; the trouble is in the nature of things. It is in the gulf fixed; it is in the difference between the conscience of the condemned—self-condemned and entirely awakened now—and the inward feeling of those whose own hearts assure them of their faithfulness. This fire of remorse in the soul is the first element in that wages of sin which is death.

2. Our Lord was at especial pains to make it clear that guilt and condemnation increase according to the measure of light, and power of love, that have been sinned against. He was wont to measure the guilt of communities in this way; upbraiding the cities that had rejected him and denouncing against them a retribution proportioned to the measure of heavenly grace they had resisted; this made their guilt greater than the worst of the heathen cities of old. Even more fundamental in him was the feeling of the responsibility incurred by persons who deliberately rejected his offers of salvation. One saying will occur to many minds as peculiarly expressive of this feeling in Christ: "This is the judgment that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil." These words are the key to much in Christ. They were not spoken by him in anger, nor in the spirit of a judge denouncing penalty. They were a part of his discourse to Nicodemus, and followed close upon that proclamation, which Luther used to call the little gospel: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." They declared the cause of disbelief in such a gospel as this to be the

soul's love and practice of sin, and its guilt to be self-evident. The cause, the act, the retribution, all were in an order of nature.

Another saying of Christ cannot be too highly valued for the precision with which it conveys the truth that the measure of guilt is proportioned to the measure of the known light of obligation in the face of which the sin was committed: "And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and made not ready, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he who knew not and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."

3. But here already a third element of the judgment of sin becomes apparent, which is the displeasure, even the awful displeasure, of God. Nothing can be plainer than that this also is a form of natural retribution. To suppose that love can be otherwise than displeased with the sinner is to suppose that love can be unmindful of its claims as based in eternal right. Love's right to rule all hearts in God's universe rests on the fact that a society fulfilling the high purpose of God in the complete happiness of its members can be built on no other basis. Can there be any other displeasure at the transgressor so weighty as one which has this clear perception at its source?

The world has been full from the beginning of voices lifted angrily in condemnation of sinners. The voice of Jesus was often lifted in anger, but it was only so lifted when perfect love had a perfect right to be offended. Even then, it is to be noticed, those awful denunciations were not against individuals. Our Lord, when on earth, closed the door of hope against no mortal. His denunciations were against classes of men, and these, all of them, such as did violence, both in their spirit and their conduct, to the simplest and self-evident obligations of love. "Woe unto you, hypocrites," he cried out against the Pharisees, "because ye shut the door of heaven against men; for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye those who are entering in to enter."

A question not without difficulty arises here, the question how the sympathy of God's heart of love with very abandoned sinners, so apparent everywhere, can be made to harmonize with this divine displeasure against them. It is vain to say that the Pharisee's sin was so aggravated as to put him outside the possibility of heaven's sympathy. Even the Pharisee was not without something in him to love, and the Pharisee, as well as others, might plead in palliation of his guilt that his spirit in its worst features was a part of him by nature, being

inherited by him from his forefathers. Christ's humanity was not so narrow as to exclude the Pharisees from his sympathy, when any individual one among them gave him the chance to exercise it.

We need not count it in any true sense an explanation of this anomaly to say that Christ's displeasure was against sin and not against the sinner; such pale abstractions as this are not the refuge of the strong. There are two considerations which may be urged as of force to reconcile the seeming contradiction. One is that displeasure and sympathy are not opposites in such a sense that they cannot coexist even in a perfectly balanced mind. Are there not rather cases in which they not only coexist, but each is the more vehement on account of the other? Take the instance of a father whose son has committed a disgraceful act through the strength in him of a passion against which the father himself has waged an incessant and, as he knows in his heart, only an imperfectly successful warfare. Shall he withhold his sympathy, refusing to see anything but the guilt of his son? This were to substitute an angry will for a true heart; and to convert displeasure into violence. Shall he then condone the offence; covering it out of sight with a multitude of excuses? This would

be to be false to his own soul history; it would be to dishonor his own honor; it would be treachery to his conviction of right; it would be faithlessness to the son of his love entrusted to his keeping; and if he has left that son unwarned of the evil taint in the blood from which he sprang, and unfortified against it by all the help he could bring, it would be adding to the guilt of that act of unfaithfulness. Plainly in such a case sympathy and displeasure must be united, even as they were in Christ, and love and wisdom must decide how and in what proportion each must be employed.

Another very important truth helps us to an understanding of this question. Judgment was real, but its full time was not yet. The solemn and consistent claim of Christ was, "The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son." He knew that the great day was coming when, in other guise—as one whose seat was on the right hand of power, and supported by the angels of heaven—he was to summon the world before his throne in judgment. But that day, he consistently taught, was not yet; it was in the future. "I judge no man," was as yet his cry. It was the hopefulness of love that ruled the world; love in grace, love in its divine mission to save. While, therefore, there was judgment, it was

judgment in suspense, and consistent with the profoundest sympathy.

This is a great truth for our day. As the gospel ripens in souls conformed to their Lord, it is seen to be more worthy their best devotion than it could have seemed in any of its past ages. History helps it; science helps it; maturer tastes, the product of eighteen centuries and a half of Christian culture, welcome it; hearts in closer communion with God are better fitted to understand and serve it; now, therefore, we do well to certify that it is hope's day that rules among men. But we need the more on that account to take heed lest we yield ourselves up to the softness of mere sentiment. It was not thus with the Savior. In the warm light of the love of God he did indeed entreat his brethren to come to him and be saved; but at the same time, in the cold light of that love protecting its own mighty interests, he taught them the exceeding guilt of their sin, and warned them solemnly of the retribution it would inevitably bring, if they rejected him.

4. Another form which retribution takes, and equally in the order of nature, is the effect of sin in its character of selfishness to produce dissension within the spirit destructive of its unity; destructive, therefore, of true life and the joy of life.

This element of retribution is the one nearest the personality in man, and therefore the most impossible to escape. If what we see among men is as it appears, then it becomes possible for some, after long hatred of God's ways, to say in their hearts, "There is no God." There are those also who seem to be able to turn a deaf ear to the conscience, and to still the feeling of remorse. But to escape the suffering arising from inward disharmony — the weaknesses, the disturbances, the enmities, the dissatisfactions caused by sin in the heart, and reacting on it from surrounding hearts—that is beyond the power of any. These inward disharmonies have so become in us a nature, they are so almost universally a matter of inheritance and a part of our condition as a race, that the life within the kingdom of love is only less affected by them than the life without. St. Paul is full of exhortations addressed to the Christians of his day, against jealousies, strifes, factions, enmities, and other forms of the great spirit of discontent that surges continually in human hearts. It is still true that the church, notwithstanding the help that it should receive from faith, is not far advanced on the way to deliverance from this defect of life. The time of that deliverance is not even in sight as yet to most eyes. In nothing are

we farther behind. But that deliverance must come before those even who are partakers in the heavenly calling shall escape the miserable effects of the discord which sin has wrought in human nature.

As for hearts that reject the spirit of the kingdom—this is a form of retribution to which that choice inevitably leads; nor is there any possible escape from it except in the soul's conversion to the spirit of love. What hell will be—if there be indeed a realm where selfishness fully ripens its fruits; where, moreover, since the very desire of better things has disappeared, quenched in the supreme love of self and sin, hope itself has no longer any substance—that utter discord of life it is as little given us fully to understand as it is the perfect harmonies of the kingdom of the blest.

5. It remains to speak of one more form which love takes on in its judgment of sin. It was the one most upon Christ's heart; it seems indeed ever to have been before his eyes, as though he could not shut it out. In many ways he urged it, coming around to it as the thought which had in it the utmost conceivable of loss, and even of horror—it was being shut out at last from love's companionship, love's empire, the communion of souls within the kingdom of love and of God. Never have

there fallen from human lips words breathing such tenderness as some in which Jesus preached this truth—such at least is the feeling of many who know him well.

"And the door was shut."

"And then will I say unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity."

"Then the king said unto his servants, bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

"And these shall go away into eternal punishment."

It is the word outer that is the word of meaning. It means the outside darkness—to be shut out from the feast of love, the kingdom of love, the glad fellowship, the spirit's life in its native air. And yet it is more than mere exclusion. "Bind him hand and foot." It is the exclusion of one with whom the king is justly incensed because he has not on the wedding garment; woven by love, cleansed by love's sacrifice, put on in holy penitence of love, and becoming thus love's attestation in him that wears it.

It is plain how inevitable under natural law is this form of retribution. This man, who has been at last thrust out by God, has first

shut himself out; for he has cultivated tastes the opposite of the heavenly spirit, till even divine love can no longer change them. This will certainly become true before he is finally shut out. He will be shut out because he is proved incapable of finding a life in communion with God, and in the heavenly citizenship, so entirely has his will gone over to the choice of evil. He is shut out because his place is without. A malignant God might add torture to this punishment. This would be a needless cruelty; the doom is complete without it; it has in it all the elements of the death of a soul.

But can this, indeed, be the end to which any being whom God has made in love is destined? Or, to phrase it differently, can a God of love have made any soul to come at last to this as its end? We have here a great question, which the feeling of each of us would gladly answer in the negative, but which in fact no man can answer. Our Lord himself has clothed what he said concerning it in words differently interpreted by different minds. Is not one thing clear—that it is as little given us to deny the possibility of this as it is to affirm it? Who of us shall dare to lift the veil which God in Christ has let fall over the future of the unredeemed soul?

Can the future have a rich promise when all

the wealth of promise in the young present has come to naught? Has judgment, then, no reality? Or is judgment to be confounded with the discipline whose failure constitutes judgment? Can any dare to say that Christ's agony of spirit over those threatened with the loss of all, had no basis in any reality which has ever existed, or that shall ever exist? Or shall a child of man believe that it could rejoice him as much as it would have rejoiced the Son of God, to sound full, and sweet, and unmistakable, an assured and endless hope for every human being? Let us believe that it is the divine love that lets the darkness lie on the solemn future, save as the spirit makes its salvation good, here in the earth-life, and while the chance, through riches of grace, is without any doubt whatever given to it.

XII

THE INCARNATION

In an early chapter we saw it to be one of the functions of the revelation made in the world's development, to exert a constant illumining and interpretive influence on the Christian revelation. We possess in that revelation the leading principles of spiritual truth in their perfection. It is, however, necessary that the application of these truths to the ever-changing conditions of human life should be constantly renewed. The most important of the agencies to accomplish this seems to be the discovery of great natural truths by men of science moved upon by the Divine Spirit, and, in so far as they affect Christian doctrine, the proper reception of these truths into the body of Christian teaching. There are already many bible conceptions which have been greatly changed, and their power over us increased under this influence. Christianity as a system of truth has been steadily growing to larger dimensions as the centuries have advanced, and this process

is certain to continue. This all will see who will stop to think what the creative days are to us, as compared to what they probably were to the writer of the book of Genesis; or what the stars of heaven are to us compared to what they were to Job; or what it means to us that all the heavenly hosts praise God, as compared with what it meant to ancient readers of the psalms. We do, indeed, give daily thanks that God's universe and God himself are so much more resplendent with glory to his saints now than they were in those old days. These improvements in our knowledge of God and apprehension of the truths revealed by him in the bible have arisen chiefly through the discovery of great cosmic and geological truths. The theory of evolution is now added to its predecessors, and promises equally important results. It is a matter of some moment to us to know what effect this scientific theory, should it eventually be confirmed, is likely to have on various bible teachings which of necessity enter into our discussion, and I therefore take the opportunity at this point, where we are passing from the law of judgment as revealed by Christ to that of the forgiveness of sins, to consider this question.

It is a matter of concern to some that the evolution theory will necessitate a recasting

of the story of the fall, which follows close in the bible on that of the creative days, even as these have been already transformed by discoveries in geology into vast creative periods. The story of the fall is concerned with the important truth of the sinfulness of man by nature. It affirms this truth, and in this lies its chief significance. Its method of doing this is one evidently adapted to the literary requirements of the age in which it was written. The writer takes an old cosmogenic legend and moulds it to his purpose. The legend is after the nature of those old stories, and enters with particularity into the manner of sin's introduction. No less on that account is it the fact of sin's reality, not the manner of its introduction, which is the truth of consequence. If, then, we are obliged to give up as mythological the story of the devil's assuming the form of a snake, and in that form tempting the mother of our race to disobey the God with whom she had till then lived in friendly intercourse, we should consider whether there may not be new light thrown on our relations with God which will make amends for any supposed loss. These points of advantage will be considered later, but previous to that I will attempt to meet certain difficulties which so unaccustomed a doctrine may naturally awaken in some minds.

The evolutionary teaching is exceedingly strange to us; but we should consider that if it be indeed true that our race is descended from a preceding animal creation, and this to the theologian is the heart of meaning in the evolutionary theory, we have every reason to believe that this is a process lying in a larger order. We cannot suppose that the line of procedure adopted here on earth is one outside any general order in God's universe; nor that we are made subject to some peculiar and strange manner of experiment, different from that employed in the case of all other beings. We are convinced by a just analogy that this cannot be; for, as we have learned concerning the starry spaces, that so far as the telescope and spectroscope can reveal their secrets, the same great laws govern in the universal worlds of matter; so we naturally believe that throughout the vast realms of life the same laws in general prevail. Here, too, there must be a connection of thought and harmony of purpose in the different worlds. Is it possible to believe that each world of created beings is a disconnected world, leading a wholly separate existence, its history contributing nothing to the general complement of life in God's universe—each a world of mere matter and its phenomena, running its brief course

and being then blown out, like a bubble? Can this be all which such a universe, in which great souls reach out longingly towards the infinite of things, and in which all souls, truly such, are probably capable of an indefinite development—can this be all that it means? It is the impossibility that this can be so which is the strongest intellectual ground of our immortality. This is an instance of the larger dimensions into which the scripture truths are growing under the light thrown upon them by the progress of the world in its unfolding. If any say, "Too large dimensions, these thoughts put God too far from us," may not the answer properly be, "The larger the object of our faith, the nobler the faith itself, for there is an infinite in man which is not appalled, but rather attracted by his ever-growing conception of the infinite in God?"

The almost interminable length of the process of man's formation at first confounds us. We had already come to think of the earth as unfolding very slowly; but the thought that the process in man's formation was so inconceivably long seems incredible. Until a few years ago we had supposed our creation to have been instantaneous; that God had made us at a single stroke. It is now presented as a process maturing slowly through millions of

years. But, after all, when we stop to think, what are these millions of years to God? God has time enough. Time must be the commonest of all things to him, and the emptiest—like space, mere form without substance, save as it is possible it should be filled with substance, and especially substance of life, which is alone of value.

One more and very serious difficulty is this —that under the evolutionary theory of man's origin he begins his career loaded with so heavy weights, and with the odds favoring the victory of evil in him rather than of good. This, indeed, if true, is a very serious objection, and it would be well could we become settled in our minds as to its truth or falsity.

From the moral point of view innocence is the peculiar characteristic of the animal world. Not being possessed of reason and intelligent choice, the animal cannot be held responsible for his actions. Nobody believes that God will hold him responsible, or that we ought so to hold him. Meanwhile he has great claims upon our regard by reason of the trust with which he generally returns our affection, if we care to bestow it upon him, and by the docility with which he submits to such training as our selfishness, not often our love, subjects him to. We need to bear in mind that while mankind have

as a rule been alive to what they consider the lower traits of the brute creation, they have generally been far too little disposed to appreciate their more unselfish characteristics. A little reflection, however, will teach us that these are sufficient, if our inheritance includes a fair proportion of them at their best, to provide us with a considerable stock of good qualities to offset whatever lower ones may fall to us. Professor Drummond has done us good service in calling our attention to these in his *Ascent of Man*. Take it then all in all, does it not seem probable that in adopting this method God has done no more than to furnish man with such a provision of traits—all antecedently innocent—as to make his conflict, when at last he becomes entrusted with reason and conscience, as nearly as could be an even one—selfish and unselfish elements, lower and higher inclinations urging freely and equally their claims on him? Should the difficulties to be overcome seem immense, and the work to be done of frightful magnitude, there may still possibly be more than answering advantages. Let us pass on to consider these.

1. If we may judge from what seems to be the most conspicuous trait of our human nature, the particular purpose of God in the creation of this world, subordinate to the general purpose

of adding a new people to the kingdom of his love, was to provide a race in which the principle of selfhood should be strongly developed; or, as it is often expressed, a race endowed with a strong personality. To say that this seems to have been his plan for the human race does not recessarily imply that it is his plan for all the races he creates. It is only natural to suppose that perfect wisdom would arrange for variety in the unfolding of worlds, even as it does in the individuals of a race. In our own case we see how wonderfully our unfolding was adapted to its end, if that was to furnish man at the outset of his career with a mighty feeling of selfhood. No sooner does the life of intelligence and of that moral responsibility that flows from the power of intelligent choice begin in this being, than he finds arising in him a conflict proportioned in its magnitude to the strength of the natural desires engendered in his progenitors before the birth of self-consciousness at all. Ignorant as we are of the particulars of that early condition, we may safely assume that these desires took two principal forms; the one the eager pursuit of objects sought, the other the destruction of the enemies that stood in the way of their pursuit. Whichever of these forms they took — from the violence of hunger, or of sexual passion, or

of mother love, down to the mighty lust of battle with an opposing enemy—they were unrestrained. There was no higher obligation; no other decisive law than that of self.

This is not to say that a wider community-sense may not have modified the individual consciousness in many cases; it is not to deny the existence of delicacies of affection, and nobilities of feeling, and habits of instinctive forecast, and possibly even of deliberation; but the principle was still that of selfhood, and of selfhood unmodified by the one force able really to control it, that of the consciousness of duty.

This is, however, to be said concerning the presence in this highly developed feeling of selfhood of unselfish elements; there is a forward look to them; they point to high possibilities; and they are congruous with the supposition of a great moral outcome to the process; for when reason and conscience become at last developed, they may be able to turn to their use these elements. Take for instance the family ties, tribal and other associations of friendly co-operation, and the generous impulses, reaching in many cases to utter self-sacrifice, to which these give rise—what material they furnish for reason and conscience later to use!

It is true that there are those who stoutly deny that there is any plan whatever in the ordering and laws of the universe; but such exclude a thing which to other minds is the one explanation of the world—that it is what it is because we are a part of the universe of God, and the laws of the eternal kingdom of right in that universe control the process of our development. It is this also that explains the fact that the eternally right has the immense advantage in the slow onward progress, and will in the end, under God's guidance, bring us to the appointed goal.

2. If these thoughts are true, the source of the enormous power of sin is plain, and the reason why God permits that it should possess that power. The power of sin is the power of self-will asserting itself in disregard of reason, conscience, and the higher impulses of our nature. The force with which this self-will acts is in proportion to the strength of the aboriginal desires by means of which it got its early training—a training well adapted to develop strength of self-will, or a determined selfhood. The early forms resulting from such a training were not, indeed, necessarily selfish, but they were naturally selfish—that is, their natural trend was toward self-indulgence unrestrained by the principle of right. And this

accorded with the divine purpose, since it was not excellence of character that was wanted at the first; it was rather the strength which alone can impart to character its highest excellence—it was the foundation in force of selfhood on which could be based a discipline whose result should be strength subdued to the rendering of a willing allegiance to duty.

We may say with reverence concerning God's plan, that it seems to have had in view these two objects—to turn the mighty force of selfhood in man to the service of eternal love in his kingdom; and to do this in a way not to impair its strength. His method of accomplishing this twofold object is the incarnation.

3. The central power of Christ over our hearts lies in the divine sympathy with which he enters into the conditions of our lot. Consider this, then, whether under the new view of man's origin we cannot see the possibility of a more complete sympathy with us on the part of God than seems to have been open to him under the old view. According to that view our race was created with the faculties of a spiritual being fully developed; reason, right feeling, power of choice. Hence the selfish animal instincts, and all the infernal passions springing to life in man must have been his own work—the product of his own wilfulness

choosing wicked self-indulgence and exploring all the dark ways of cruelty and lust, by the inventions of a spirit abandoning itself to the power of evil. How small seems the chance that God should sympathize deeply with a race like this! Pity for their misfortunes he might have, but hardly, it would seem, sympathy with them in their lot.

But is it possible for God to withhold his sympathy from the child of his own thought, held by his own ordering in the grasp of passions which were innocent in his far-off ancestry because they were the natural instincts of beings unblest as yet with the moral sense, but which in him have come to be guilty because in him the sense of right has been awakened? Here the discipline, tremendous in its severity, is the Father's own plan for creating a nobler communion between his child and himself. Can he be otherwise than full of sympathy with him? On the contrary, such a sympathy is love's privilege, it is love's right, and who shall dare to say it is not love's obligation, since love in reasonable souls, beyond all other passions, is founded in right, and subject to its commands. And a wonderful thing let us notice before leaving this theme—how our very sinning itself is not left outside this circle where the divine sympathy acts, but

is included within it. According to Jewish modes of thought this would be a thing impossible to be believed. God might have pity for the misfortunes sinners had brought upon themselves, for after all they were beings made by his hand; but sympathy with them, and especially sympathy not although they were sinners, but even in their sinning (mark that I say in their sinning, not in their sins), this was even beyond imagination's power to conceive. But in Christ this seemingly impossible is made real, and the Christian is on Jewish not Christian grounds who fails to understand this. It is given the Christian to believe that in no point of our condition does Christ fail us—not in our temptations, for he himself has experienced them; and not in our sinning, since he knows the almost compelling power of our lusts at times to control us, and since he knows that the heart of our woe is here.

If it be said—There is no teaching in scripture of any such unfolding of our race out of a lower and merely animal creation, it may be answered: Such a truth as this was not for the bible to teach; it had to wait the time appointed for its revelation in the slow unfolding of the human reason. It was clearly outside the sphere of Christ, since it belonged in strictness to the realm of science, nor was the

world in any sense ripe for it in his day. Our faith is not weakened on this account. It is enough for us that whether our Lord had this truth consciously in mind or not, his work was in accordance with it. It is enough that, if we accept it as a truth, it helps to explain Christ; it illumines his life among us, and it makes plainer the meaning of his death. We accept this truth—those of us who do accept it—because its light, like that of all truth acquired from whatever source, blends with the light that shines in Christ to add to its clearness and beauty.

Inasmuch as our line of thought has brought us to the incarnation, I will add a few words concerning light thrown directly by recent discoveries on this great theme. Among the Christian doctrines this is profound beyond all the rest—mysterious also, and impossible for a finite mind fully to comprehend. And yet in all ages a deeply seated instinct has led men to believe in it. Here also we have important help furnished us by a better knowledge of the nature of matter. For if matter is in its essence, as now seems probable, a form of force, then it is more nearly allied than has been supposed with spirit, and we may more easily conceive of it as a product of the eternal spirit, not wholly unlike its source.

We have been wont to separate sharply two spheres of our spirits' intercourse—that with the world of matter, and that between us and God. This is less necessary now for two reasons: First, because we know that the most spiritual exercises of the human mind have their appropriate nerve—which of course means material—excitations. The precise relation between these two is indeed still a mystery, but the fact of the connection between them, and of the very great closeness of the connection, and of the almost infinite fineness of this nerve matter fitting it for its function in the spirit's behalf, is no longer a mystery; it is very clearly and certainly known.

Another thing, revealed indeed, in Christ, but very imperfectly comprehended, we begin somewhat better to understand—that God, who breathed his own Spirit into matter, making it a thing fit to furnish a body for the soul he loved, can himself, naturally and not by a species of violence, employ a body to be his medium in holding communion with that soul. This is the simple rationale of the incarnation, whose actualization the filial heart leaps to find in Christ. It is an act in its nature evidently akin to that in creation. In both God is seen in the exercise of a power inherent in his being, of coming into relation with a somewhat other

than himself. In the latter the power to give birth to a world on which his love may bestow itself. In the former the power to identify himself with his creation in order to accomplish the end sought by it.

One of the most marked and wisest tendencies of theological thought in our age is seen in the effort to rid the Christian system of the seemingly unnatural elements that have abounded in it, and to lift it as far as possible into the realm of the natural, or I might perhaps better say the larger natural. We may surely rejoice if we can see this to be measurably true even in the mysterious doctrine of the incarnation itself.

XIII

GOD'S SYMPATHY WITH MAN

In the last chapter we considered the peculiar claim upon the divine sympathy which the recently discovered facts of man's origin seem to give us. A few thoughts were offered also concerning the presence of God with us in the incarnation. We saw that the assumption of our flesh was not to be conceived of as a thing foreign to the being of God, but as wholly germane to it, and suited to our case. Coming now to the examination of Christ's life with a view to discover the leading features of his sympathy, we find ourselves on familiar ground. The following seem the features of especial use to us.

The three most common forms of earthly trouble aside from sin are poverty, sickness, and a poor inheritance of natural gifts. Much might be said, and much has been said, concerning the wonderful sympathy which our Lord showed men in all these forms of their trouble—in the first, poverty, sharing their lot

with them, since this was in his power; in the second, sickness, spending himself for their cure; and in the third, degeneracy, taking them with a peculiar tenderness into his great heart's protecting love. These and such as these were included, with the children, in the number of his "little ones." This was indeed true of all who were small in their own and the world's estimation, if they would let him be their friend. But it was men in their sins—which he saw so clearly to be the source whence came their greatest need—that he loved and cared for the most. Here, where their fellow-men had the most of judgment and the least of sympathy for them, he had the most of sympathy.

This sympathy, while more actively displayed toward hearts that were open to his approach, appeared also in yearnings over those rejecting him. Instances of this were his weeping over Jerusalem and his prayer on the cross for his crucifiers.

Perhaps nothing else added so peculiar an element of power to our Lord's ministry as the new consciousness it awakened in souls of the nearness of God and of the abundance of grace from him that was flowing about them. The apostle John reports, as among the earliest of our Lord's great sayings, this: "For God so

loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life."

How triumphant is the ring of hope in this saying—hope in our Lord's own heart, and hope for the world of lost men! As such it finds an echo to-day under heaven's wide dome, wherever man is found. The vast and universal welcome given these words is not merely on account of the love they describe, nor its freeness, such that no barriers of ignorance nor even hatred in man can hinder it; but it springs even more out of the feeling of wonder that such a love can animate the heart of the Almighty towards such beings as we are. This is our first acquaintance with the real glory of God. It is our first vision of him in that infinite love that flows out in a divine adaptation to the needs of all his creatures. And the wonder of it constantly grows upon us, as we observe the manner in which God comes into our lives in Christ—so full is he of a truly heavenly sympathy; reaching to all the life, its sins even not excepted, and turning our deepest darkness into a glad morning light. A buoyant spirit marked those first years of our Lord's ministry. It was a period of heavenly hope and cheerful enthusiasm. Earth has never seen another like it; will never see another.

But a marked change was impending, and it dates from about the time of the withdrawal of the popular favor, near the end of the second year of his work, consequent upon his rejection of the people's offer to make him their king and his exposure of the selfish spirit that in reality underlay this enthusiasm. The defection of so many would naturally suggest the fact, of which he was not ignorant, that the nation as a whole would soon reject him, while it could not fail to deepen his feeling of the destructive power of sin in man's being. From this time accordingly the real nature of sin as the seed of death in the soul began more to occupy his mind, as also the necessity of his own death in order to a complete victory over it. The first distinct prediction of his death was made about this time.[1] The eternally foreordained end of his life toward which all was moving assumed henceforth a great place in the Savior's teaching. This did not interfere with the old cheerful sympathy, nor with the constant kindly activities of healing and of teaching; but there was blended with these so compassionate a feeling for our evil case by reason of our sin, and the utter ruin it is working in us, that, taken in connection with his death for sin's cure, it has made the world

[1] Math. xvi., 21.

over, and turned our life here into an infinitely more sacred and precious thing.

Prominent among the influences emanating from our Lord's ministry at this period was his urgent commendation to his disciples of the cross principle as the one true and all-blessed means of their escape from their woes. It cannot be said that this principle was new in human experience. The fact of love, or right in some other of its forms, swaying the spirit even to the point of death willingly incurred in its behalf, was a familiar one in all lands. None the less was it left to Jesus to proclaim that eternal devotion of self to higher ends which is for all men the last obligation of right, as well as the soul's highest blessedness.

These sayings of Christ take on two forms: the one more outward in which he declares that bearing one's cross—meaning thereby, as he explains, the renunciation of all things for his sake—is the one condition of true discipleship: the other in which he teaches that herein alone is the reality of spiritual life. It will suffice to bring before us a single instance of each.

1. Christ had been predicting his early death. Peter protested, "Let this be far from thee, O Lord." Jesus turned to him and said: "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art a

stumbling-block unto me; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of man." The form of this rebuke carries us back to the scene in the wilderness. The best explanation both of its form and of its severity is, that it brought to the remembrance of our Lord the attempt of Satan at that time to induce him to prefer the ministry of power to that of suffering. Peter became to Jesus a Satan because, instigated evidently by Satan, he appealed to that same feeling in his heart. In no other way does it seem possible to account for the fact that Peter became a stumbling-block to Jesus. Jesus now accordingly reaffirms for himself and binds on his disciples the law of self-abnegation, which in the wilderness he adopted as his life-principle, saying: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." The universal obligation of the spirit of self-sacrifice when required for right's sake is the truth here declared; and we are assured that without it no substantial union in character with God can be attained.

2. That the cross bearing spirit has in it the elements of increased present happiness our Lord did not fail even in these more outward

sayings to make clear. "Ye shall have manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." In the sixth chapter of the gospel of John the spiritual law is expounded from which this follows. In the discourse there reported Jesus said: "I am the true bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever, and the bread which I will give him is my flesh for the life of the world." Mind, he says not, The bread which I will give him is my flesh, but my flesh for the life of the world; that is my flesh given in sacrifice for mankind. The true divine life is in you, he says, according as you receive into your hearts the spirit that will be manifested by me when my body is offered up on the cross for the world's life. This was a saying intended to be a power in these disciples, when they should have become witnesses of his death; it was intended to be a saying for the church to possess to the end of time. And as its importance was vast, it was not left to stand alone as here uttered. It was, in substance, repeated with a great access of meaning at the last supper, when Jesus took the broken bread and gave it to his disciples with the words: "This is my body, which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me."

A thing very marked in our Lord was the

peculiar suffering which he evidently felt in the prospect of his death. This suffering took the form of those painful and gloomy anticipations which largely filled his mind as the end approached. It is true that we are wont to think of his whole life as invested with an undertone of sadness on this account; but in the earlier years the evidences of it are so slight that we question whether it may not be our fancy only that perceives it. Towards the end this feeling grows deeper, and even expresses itself at times in passionate words of sorrow and distress. This power of the fact of his impending death to affect the mind of Jesus is beyond what the circumstances, as they appear on the surface, would seem to justify. The first of these outbreaks of suffering known to us occurred about a year before his death. "I came to cast fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Fire is for cleansing, but it is for cleansing by consumption of the dross. This seems to be Christ's thought. By his death he is to accomplish such a work of purification. It is with a great feeling of dread that he looks forward to it; for it is to involve his being "baptized with a baptism"—that is plunged into, or overpowered by the waters,

or better perhaps the fires—of suffering; and his heart is straitened within him at the prospect. The tender feeling of Jesus for his disciples is shown by the fact that this prevision of his own sufferings awakens in him the thought that they will have to share in them. He goes on to picture their sufferings, especially those arising from the disruption of families, and the tearing asunder of earth's most tender ties.

Our Lord's tender feeling for his disciples as destined to suffer with him, was shown on another occasion, when the mother of James and John came to him to beg places of honor in his kingdom for her sons. The story says that Jesus turned to the young men and asked them: "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" When they in their ignorance answered yes, he did not rebuke them for their presumption; but accepted the fidelity of discipleship which he discerned as the truest of all the mixed feelings in their hearts, and replied with a tender and beautiful sympathy: "The cup that I drink, shall ye drink, and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized." Here again the word baptized comes in, and conveys the same profound feeling—not of the few sharp pangs that should

end all, but of a tide of sorrows that should overwhelm him, and them together with him.

A very interesting disclosure of the feeling of Jesus in anticipation of his death was made when certain Greeks were introduced to him by Philip on the day of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This coming of the Greeks was a rare event; and the first thought it suggested to him was that of the ultimate triumph of his cause, of which this served to his mind as an omen. He cried out: "The hour has come when the Son of man shall be glorified." This joyful exclamation affects us with a peculiar feeling of pleasure, because it proves that at this period an exalted forecast of the result of his self-sacrifice did sometimes possess him. This was immediately followed by a profound saying: "Except a seed fall into the ground, and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." The connection of thought in this saying is clear. Jesus saw his body and mere bodily life to be to the centre of his being, the divine spirit animating him, what the envelope is to the germ in the kernel of wheat. As this envelope must die to afford nourishment to the germ for whose use it exists, so must his body perish that the spirit might enter into a more victorious life. Following this his thought turns here again to the

disciples. He thinks of their lives as subject to the same principle, and announces once more, but with an increased impressiveness, the truth already so familiar to their ears: "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. . . . If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor." The way in which they are to follow him is that of the cross, leading on to the glory beyond. But this brings up before him the vision of that pathway: its sorrows rise in his heart and almost overwhelm him. He cries out in his distress: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour." We can but ask what means this sudden outburst of feeling? It seems as though the conflict of the wilderness were here for a moment renewed; and that the sight of these Greeks, impelled by an inward force to seek him, suggested the thought that possibly even yet the harvest of the world might be reaped without his being plunged, and his people with him, into this baptism of suffering. If this be his thought, it is but for a moment; and his last cry arises: "But for this cause came I unto this hour; Father, glorify thy name." Thereupon came a voice out of heaven: "I have both glorified it and

will glorify it again." The fact that on each of these occasions the Lord admits his disciples to share with him in his suffering should put us on our guard against the disposition to ascribe these anticipatory sufferings to an atoning quality in his death of such a nature that they could have no participation in it. No stronger argument than that afforded by these passages could be urged against that disposition.

On the other hand, it is not necessary to suppose, it is quite impossible to suppose, that they could taste the full bitterness of the cup their master was called to drink. No such intensity of suffering was possible to them as came by the eternal foreordination to him. The last scene of our Lord's suffering anticipatory of his death—that in the garden of Gethsemane—affords the most abundant proof of this. The betrayal has not yet been consummated, but Jesus knows it to be in preparation, and has vividly before his mind the cup he is to drink. If the prayer is to have its full significance, we must suppose it to be still possible in the nature of things that the cup should be avoided. Not on the cross itself do we see greater agony than that which now comes upon him. He tells the three who are with him: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." In such a strait it is only

prayer that can relieve him, and in this he must be alone with the Father. He goes forward a little and falling on his knees cries: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." He adds: "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." This is repeated three times. Luke tells us that in his agony, "His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground."

It is evident that Christ's tumult of feeling in the garden was a renewal, in heightened intensity, of the conflict he had when the Greeks came to be introduced to him, as this was itself a renewal of the conflict in the wilderness. If there was a question it was not between going on with and giving up his work, but rather the old question — forced again by this last agony of anticipation on his mind—between the method of power and that of suffering. When, after the struggle was over, Peter drew his sword and cut off the high priest's servant's ear, Jesus said to him: "Thinkest thou I cannot beseech my Father, and he will even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?" This renders certain the presence of the thought that the method of power was not even now impossible. But he goes on to say: "How then should the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" We have here, per-

haps, the most remarkable thing of all in this preparatory scene—the feeling of the great necessity that urged the Savior on—that will of God, high, unalterable, which his lofty spirit could do nothing but obey, whithersoever it might lead him.

XIV

THE BOND OF SUFFERING

THE facts of our Lord's death, outwardly considered, are entirely familiar. His betrayal by one of his disciples, his conviction by a prejudiced court, who stooped to receive the aid of perjured witnesses, his desertion by his friends, his being handed back and forth between Pilate and Herod, the confirmation of his sentence by the Roman governor against his own sense of right, the cruelties practised against him by the soldiers, the brutal cries of the rabble demanding his death and refusing the pardon urged by Pilate—these were but the preliminaries, and are chiefly noticeable because of their appropriateness to the events that followed.

As to the form of execution employed in our Lord's case, that by crucifixion, it was probably the most shameful and the most distressing of any then in use. Loving hearts turn sick at the thought of that sacred body, whose very touch was healing, hung up to drag on

the cruel nails through the heat of that day; of the torn and bleeding tendons, the mockery, the thirst, the cruel thoughts toward him of the concourse gathered to witness the sight. Our painful sense of the ignominy endured by this sufferer is heightened by the extraordinary elevation of his character. It is this which excites in us the feeling of shame and even of dread. Has the history of the universe another such sight to show? Will it patiently endure to behold this sight?

And yet we are aware that these are only the outward aspects of Christ's death; and that these sufferings, great as they are, are what many noble-minded men in every age of the world have borne. Ingratitude! a multitude of benefactors of their kind have learned the meaning of that word. Nor was Jesus the first exalted spirit to suffer ignominy. Nor was he alone in the respect that, having devoted himself to a great cause, he was compelled at his death to see it scarcely as yet begun—a cause despised, and to human eyes without a future. In all these respects Jesus was at an advantage over his brethren whose names are on the world's roll of noble sufferers. The very loftiness of his spirit, if it increased the incongruity of his being exposed to such suffering, placed him higher than

others above the power of "these light afflictions" to move him. As to the apparently unpromising condition of his work, and there is scarcely a sadder feeling, who else was permitted, like him, to know that the end was eternally decreed to be success, and that these very sufferings were appointed him only because they were the essential means to that success? Plainly these things could have had little power over him; nor was he, of all men, one to hold his mere bodily life dear to him that he should not gladly lay it down at his Father's call.

And yet we find confronting us the fact that the trouble on the mind of Jesus continued substantially unrelieved through all the hours of his suffering. We see no trace of the joy swelling often into triumph, which has filled the hearts of martyrs amid sufferings equally great; nor is there anything of the thoughtful philosophy which lifted so high the soul of Socrates. No other spirit that has existed has had such store laid up of pleasant thoughts, nor such power of taking refuge in them away from earth's ills. He had dwelt in an exceedingly delightful union with God, and the sense of this had been an ever-present consciousness. It had supported him in his time of need; it had been sufficient for him. Even this now

failed him, and its failure had the force of a positive blow, added to all the rest; for it produced the sense of being abandoned by God himself. I am not disposed to lessen the force of that cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" nor to believe that it means only a momentary triumph of human weakness.[1]

It is to me more reverent, and more in sympathy with our Lord's frame of mind, to let it stand as expressing a real element of his suffering. Is it not indeed the highest expression of the most significant feature of our Lord's passion — the fact of its being so wholly unrelieved? Here as never before, and never again, our Lord was alone—this was the mark of the hour.

If now we inquire as to the real inward nature of his suffering, one answer only seems to be in accordance at once with the antecedent probabilities of the case and with the facts as they are narrated. It could not have been the ordinary suffering of noble hearts under the reproach of men. It could not have been the incongruity of a nature divinely pure, exposed to endure such contradiction of sinners.

[1] The thought that these words, which are employed in one of the psalms, occurred to Christ amid his suffering, and found utterance as expressive of his own feeling, mitigates, but does not, to my mind, remove the difficulty.

It could not have been the temporary mastery of a feeling that his Father was displeased with him, though in reality his love was as freely and richly bestowed as ever. We cannot believe that any other explanation of our Lord's suffering in his death is sufficient, except to say that it was the final supreme exercise of that sympathy with men in their woe by reason of their sin, which was his deliberate choice at the beginning of his ministry, and had been from that day on the ruling motive of his life.[1]

We have seen that for a full year before his death our Lord's sympathy with men had been assuming, increasingly, the form of a profound feeling of the ruin which sin was working in them. More and more, as the end drew nearer, did he seem to be bearing this their greatest sorrow on his heart. This process simply reached its fulfilment in his death.

[1] It is proper that a word of just obligation should here be frankly spoken. It was given to that great religious thinker, President Edwards, in his treatise entitled *The Divine Satisfaction for Sin*—to the writer's mind the most illuminating of all treatises on this subject—to set forth the real nature of these sufferings with a power peculiar to himself. Many subsequent thinkers, notably Dr. James McLeod Campbell in his book, *The Nature of the Atonement*, have furnished evidence of abundant fruit borne by these thoughts. If the present treatment of this subject have any merit, it will come largely from the writer's having absorbed these thoughts and having carried them out to their results.

Think what it is we believe. We believe that in the dealings of Christ, the Son of God, with sinners, the perfect laws of the divine love are seen in actual operation among us; and that his death in our behalf is their very highest expression. What then, more closely considered, are the facts of his death? From midnight on during the slow unfolding hours till three o'clock in the afternoon of the next day our Lord was shut in to the sole contact with sinners, in the full exercise, under intense excitement of passion, of all the evil in their hearts. Consider that this was true of him when the one passion of his heart was sympathy with them in the evil sin was working in their lives. Think to what an agony of sorrow for them his spirit must have been wrought, as he went through that day in the acute consciousness that he was the single object on which the moral evil in them poured itself out. Here were these great numbers of people of every class—men, women, and children. Here were great magistrates, teachers learned in the law, many persons faithful in public worship, many with good repute as neighbors and citizens, and considered excellent in the family. Here were multitudes of another kind; evil-minded, profligate, full of cruelty, scoffers against God. Here were others still, caring in

general for the right; but in this instance indifferent, caring more for personal interest or comfort. These were all alike in this, that their faces were turned away from the light; all, save the handful of faithful ones, letting out upon him who was himself the world's light their evil passions—contempt, hatred, cruelty, or the least guilty their indifference—scarce a trace of open sympathy tendered him; men and women glad to see him suffer; glad that they could add to his sufferings; glad to be rid of him, and not able to see that to be rid of him was to be rid of hope of heaven, and of God's love.

Should they be in such woeful wretchedness, and no heart anywhere in God's universe know about it, or care for it? Here was one heart seeing and feeling it all; knowing it indeed to the very full; knowing what it meant and all that it meant, and all that it was; and making all this shame and loss its own; love's own; yes, tasting all its bitterness, drinking the cup to the full.

For he saw it, and felt it, as it would work itself out in the far-off end. He, from God's home of love, and filled to his being's depths with the sense of the blessedness of the life of God, felt what that was in which alone this sin could end—the loss of God's love, the being

shut out of the blessedness of the kingdom. How those words of his own, "the outer darkness," must have filled his spirit now! What a meaning that word death, which he had so often used, must have had for him now; while he, the life indeed, yielded himself up to the power of such a death! Must not this awful thing, physical death, so foreign to his being, have meant to him at this hour all that of which it is a symbol to a perishing world—the forfeiture of the eternal life itself, the eternal soul death? Lo, his Father's face is hidden! Hear his longing cry for the divine sympathy withheld. Why, if not that it was part of that eternal counsel, whose high necessity he owned, that he should be left entirely free—as one from whom all other thoughts, and especially all comforting thoughts, and, most of all, the thought of his own utter blessedness should be for the time withdrawn—to become perfect in his sympathy with the need of guilty sinners and the completeness of their impending loss?

And so here again, as all through his life, the thought that abides and conquers every other is that of the necessity laid upon him. It is always present, sometimes in softened form, as in the parable of the shepherd dying to defend his sheep. But he cannot cry, "I

am the good shepherd; I lay down my life for the sheep," without adding, "This commandment have I received." Even in that earlier, all-triumphant proclamation of salvation, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," amid the joy tones that resounded through earth and in heaven, and in which the sobs of the redeemed mingled with the rejoicings of angels in light, that awful "must," "So must the Son of man be lifted up," rang out like the tone of a great solemn far-off bell, amid them all, beyond them all, wide as the universe.

Let no creature of God, from the highest to the lowest, imagine he can escape from the necessity laid upon him. God himself does not escape it. Even he must do what is right, or cease to be God. Blessed are the disciples of the divine master who can say with him: "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Blessed are they who wear his motto: "Here am I to do thy will, O God." God give us all to see this in our Lord, and to apprehend the crowning glory won by it; for now at last the cup which he dreaded but would not refuse has been drunk; the solemn, eternal necessity is accomplished; and in the hush of nature, while the darkness rolls from the sun, the last cry arises from the great sufferer, for every one among his fellow-men to hear—"It is finished."

XV

MAN'S SYMPATHY WITH GOD

THE object sought in this treatise is to interpret the special way provided by God, whereby man may come into communion with himself. If there is any single guiding thought in the book, it is this, that the word communion means not sympathy, but reciprocity of sympathy; God's purpose being that there should eventually arise between himself and man a communion of this complete sort—each coming into a loving participation with the other in his life.

In our previous study of the Savior's life we have been chiefly occupied with its disclosure of the great Father's sympathy with us in our condition of need. It is necessary for us to have, and to know that we have, this sympathy of God with us in our condition. It is, if possible, even more essential that we be ourselves brought into a living sympathy with God in his thoughts concerning us. Then only can there begin to exist a true communion between

us. Then only can there arise between us that love of mutuality in which alone can be found our perfection of life. It is in our Lord's death that the motives are found best fitted to awaken in us this second part of communion. Our Lord himself affirmed: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This was in effect to say, "My death on the cross will so reveal the character of God as to clothe it with the greatest possible attractive power upon the minds of men." It remains for us now to consider this element of peculiar power contained in our Lord's death.

1. Observe first the extraordinary exhibition of sin's true nature made in the scene about the cross set in contrast, as it was, with the stainless purity of him who hung upon it.

We need to bear in mind that the sin at the crucifixion was the common sin of human-kind; that the perpetrators of it were not depraved beyond the average of humanity. Judas and Herod Antipas were probably the worst of them; and were it given us clearly to see the motives animating each of these, it may be doubted if we should find their guilt to be aggravated beyond that of a multitude of others among men. The members of the Sanhedrin that convicted Jesus were a company of conservative gentlemen, ranking, many of

them doubtless deservedly, among the most honored in a city famous for its high moral tone. The Roman soldiers, cruel as was their treatment of Jesus, were like soldiers the world over. The disciples were probably not less true than the average of disciples to-day. The rabble was only an ordinary city rabble. The crowd of indifferent onlookers were, as the majority of easy-going people in all the ages and all the lands, busier with their own interests than with those of righteousness. The cross, indeed, as a scenic world-spectacle—and it accorded with the divine purpose that it should bear that character—was plainly ordered to the end that, as regards the merely human element in it, it should exhibit only an average of human sinfulness. The wonder and terror of the scene lay in the fact that this average of human sinfulness stands out here in a pure light, free from all false glamours: for over against it is set high and clear, for all the world to see, the stainless righteousness of the Son of God. It was on the little company of disciples that stood about the cross that the impression of this must have been at the time the strongest; but in the end does not all the world of Christ's followers partake in it? We are all there; none are absent now; it is in our presence the scene transpires. Our ears catch the

murmur of the Savior's distress, our eyes behold his sufferings, and through all the avenues of our perception his wounded purity and love assail our hearts. Is there more than one side which any one, however corrupt his heart may be, can take; if only he believes this being to be "God with us," and sees him enduring the contradiction of sinners in our behalf? Is there any who must not, for the time at least, side with God as against his enemies, and feel as he feels, sin's utter shame; the blessedness of heaven's purity?

2. We are familiar with two prominent forms which the divine love assumed in the Savior's death, each of them clothed with great power; that of benevolence, or the purest good-will to the lost race of man; and that of sacrifice, or the readiness to endure the last extreme of suffering necessary to give effect to that good-will. It is evident that these two may often belong together, and that when they do, the relation between them is that which has been expressed. Good-will to others is an end in itself. It yields, in the case of a generous mind, as real a happiness to him who bestows as to him who receives it. This is not true of suffering, which is never properly an end, but at the best only a means to an end. Man is made for happiness, and suffering is of itself

evil and only evil. This very fact makes its voluntary endurance, when required for some high necessity, the greatest evidence possible of a supreme unselfishness. On the other hand, to invent supposed occasions of suffering for certain mystical virtues imagined to reside in them, and more particularly for the example of virtue they are supposed to set men, is a mere striving after wind, a going ceaselessly about in an endless circle. Weighed in proper balances it amounts to this—suffering to the end that there may be more suffering. It is, in a word, an unlimited and aimless propagation of earth's greatest evil next to sin.

Much of the current writing, and it is to be feared the current preaching, on the subject of the atonement is liable to the charge that it opens a door, which it fails in the issue properly to shut, for the imputation of this weakness to our Lord's sacrifice. That sacrifice is presented (in strict accordance with the bible representations) as so truly divine in its nobility of self-sacrifice, that no other motive to our admiration or gratitude can equal it. If further asked what the ultimate object was sought in the suffering, since it appeared not forced by unavoidable circumstances, but voluntarily endured, no definite answer is attempted. It is simply reiterated that the

suffering was great, and that it was undergone in our behalf.

It is clear how little comfort such an answer can furnish to those who see in suffering a needless waste of an important good, happiness, unless some sufficient end beyond itself is plainly accomplished by it. Dr. Bushnell, in his profoundly suggestive treatise on *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, sets our Lord's object before us as "the healing of souls"; a true answer, if properly interpreted. But in Bushnell's elucidation of this "healing," we search in vain for the clear statement of any other elements of power it contains than its example of self-sacrifice. The question may, indeed, arise whether our lack of ability to undergo self-sacrifice may be possibly such as to require the help of that great example. Only in the want of other sufficient means to that end can we conceive this to be true. But who needs to be told that the abundance of such means provided for us in the very constitution of the world is so great as to be the one inscrutable mystery of our existence? The days of most of us are crowded full of occasions to deny ourselves, either for the maintenance of our own souls' integrity under some supreme trial of our faith, or for the welfare of our neighbors. It is not in occasions of this discipline that our

life is lacking, but in the willing heart that discovers such occasions when they arise, and faithfully embraces them. If the cross be such as to teach this lesson, and win us to the practice of it, then will it indeed be divinely fitted to our need. We are assured by our Lord that such is its real meaning—that he freely offered himself in order to accomplish for mankind an indispensable good, even the forgiveness of the sins of the world. This is the one distinctly declared, all-sufficient key to the meaning of the atonement. We cannot adhere to it too closely. It is true the way was not clearly defined in which our Lord's death avails for our forgiveness with God. The theme is a very high one, and it is laid upon us by the divine wisdom to seek for its explanation, with such light as we can get from the Savior himself and from the Spirit of truth whom he has sent. That our quest, if sincere, however far below our wishes its results may fall, will bring us into a very gracious sympathy with many thoughts of God concerning us, none need doubt.

We have seen his perfect purity and abhorrence of sin to have their place among these thoughts. The way is now clear to add to these a desire on the part of God to forgive and receive into favor his erring children, such

that no extremity of sacrifice could hinder him from fulfilling it. These are traits of the divine character full to the highest degree of motive-power over the minds of men. They are full of attractive power—the power to win souls, if they can possibly be won, to that sincere repentance which is the necessary condition, the one door of entrance, to the heavenly forgiveness. So true is this that St. Paul deemed it the sign of a peculiar depth of moral degradation not to know that "the goodness of God leadeth us to repentance." The testimony of missionaries, and others that labor among the most degraded of mankind, is clear to the effect that nothing else compares with this in its power to move such hearts to penitence for the past and aspiration for the future.

3. This goodness of God, as it is revealed in our Lord's death for our sins, presents a variety of aspects, each having its own attraction for souls, and this is only what might be expected, since great characters in the crises of their lives reveal naturally the complex elements which make them great. We have already considered the decisive choice made by our Lord, when about to enter on his ministry, of the method of sympathy as against that of power. This was indeed a crucial test of love, and clothed his life with a very peculiar charm

for the winning of our hearts. It is the friend who comes in under our poor roof in the hour of our trouble, and sits beside us, holding our hand in his, at whose loving touch the barriers of distance melt away, and our souls flow out to him. It was this method of work that our Lord chose to adopt, and the history of the world in all its ages since witnesses to the innumerable throng which it has drawn in love and devotion to his side. We have seen that this quality in his death surpassed even the exhibition which his life had made of it. For here the sympathy of God rose to the awful height of becoming partaker with us in our sins themselves, and the doom they would bring upon us if unrepented of. But if there can be any goodness of God that should lead us to sympathy with himself and repentance of our sins, it must assuredly be this.

4. The humility of God is another of his attributes clothed with a peculiar power. This trait, little esteemed in ancient times, save in the Old Testament, is still as far as possible from being one of the world's favorite virtues. St. Paul does not hesitate to ascribe it to his Lord, not viewed as man, but viewed as God. He sets before us for our imitation the eternal Son, whose right it was to claim equality with God, but who took upon him the form of a

servant, even our human form, and in the greatness of his humility became obedient unto death itself, the death of the cross. Observe how well this instance exemplifies humility's true nature. Humility, in its essential nature, is not thinking meanly of ourselves; it is our being ready, at any clear call of right, to lay aside our claims on the regard of others, and to become less than nothing in any eyes save those of God. This is the humility which the world itself, when it is nearest to God, sees to be great—the humility which must have been present to the mind of Carlyle when he called it, "In all senses Godlike, and the parent of all Godlike virtues." Has human-kind indeed ever witnessed a sight more fitted to win it to sympathy with God than that of the humility of its divine Savior? He does not hold himself aloof from us poor sinners, nor deal with us from a footing far above us; he becomes one of us, takes his place beside us, enters with a charming sympathy into all our forlorn experiences, treats us in every way like brothers. This is the sweetest and mightiest form of divine purity, love, righteousness; all combined in the humility of God.

5. The careful student of the death of Christ may see in it still another feeling on God's part, not distantly related to those we have

considered, which may be best described by the word honor. Honor stands in a near relationship to justice, which is to form the subject of our next chapter. Honor may be called a glorified justice; and such is the feeling of God displayed in the cross to which I now call attention. It is a preparation in love with which his justice, is as it were, treated, antecedently to his being called upon to dispense it. Let me seek to make clear precisely what is meant. There is a sight not uncommon on our earth, which excites in generous minds a feeling of peculiar abhorrence—it is that of men holding positions which give them power over the destinies of others, consigning their fellow-men to some terrible misery with an indifference which would seem impossible save to one ignorant of the woe which he inflicts. Many think of God as a hard taskmaster, and treat him as though they supposed this to be true of him. But his righteousness as he is revealed in Christ is not such as this. On the contrary, it is with him as though he would not consent to inflict the woe till he has first tasted that doom himself. He still inflicts it; shuts sinners out of his halls of feasting; turns them over to their own poor mockery of life if they prefer it (only then we may be sure), but he first himself drinks their cup in the all-perfect

sympathy of his divine heart, even to the fulness of the penal woes which necessity may compel him to pronounce against them. The effect is such on the mind that, however near to us these persons may be, and dear to our hearts, we leave them in his hands with the holiest possible feelings of trust, and thankfulness, and love. Contemplate the wonderful winning power in this. We are admitted, as it were, to look in upon our Father in the very process of his seeking to be reconciled to us and win us into sympathy with his thoughts towards us. He has not waited for us to move; he has moved first. "The day spring from on high hath visited us." Our judge himself has come first, with the fulness of his heavenly sympathy. He has looked at our life from our point of view, making himself acquainted with our whole condition — yea, with the very woes his judgment, if against us, will occasion. Our sins only stand out the blacker in their wickedness for this; and yet greater far than our sins appear the gentleness, the mercifulness, the perfection of honor even, in our God. How sincere indeed the repentance must be of our heart, how blest also the reconciliation between us and God, obtained by means like these!

Our Lord, after his return to the Father,

said: "To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." What can this new name be but a name descriptive of the work for that soul's salvation—a work in which the two, that soul and the Lord, have wrought together, in what has steadily grown to be a mutual, and even more a delightful sympathy, of mind and heart; until at last its end has been attained in a communion between them impossible for another to understand.

XVI

MEANING OF THE ATONEMENT

OUR Lord declared his death to be for the forgiveness of sins; and that he did not underestimate the means adopted by God to accomplish so great an end is made very clear. To his mind the universe was deeply concerned. Angels were looking on. He saw Satan falling from heaven. The Father who sent him was ready to furnish all needed help—to send him legions of angels if necessary. Sin was a barrier high as heaven's walls parting souls from God. This barrier was to be removed; these souls were to be brought nigh. This was to be accomplished by a single transaction covering a few very brief years of time, but in which these august spiritual powers were to have their part. All this is made clear. We are also given to understand what was the principal object sought by this transaction. It was to illustrate to men the character of God, to the end that coming to know him as he was, they might be won to welcome him; that they might

be even won, in return for his sympathy with them in their ways, to come into sympathy with him in his thoughts.

I need waste no time to confirm a statement so evidently justified by the whole tenor of the New-Testament scriptures as this. Christ is the pure, last, complete revelation of God,—of his love as we are taught over and over again; of his justice in some sense, we are assured in various ways, and especially in St. Paul's great saying: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by his blood . . . that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." [1]

I set these acknowledged principles of truth concerning Christ's death thus clearly before our minds at the outset of this study of God's justice, that they may serve as a safeguard to protect us as far as possible from being improperly affected by old conventional modes of thinking. A difficult task is committed to this age—the task not to undervalue, and still more not to overvalue, for this is the greater danger, the past. Especially do we need to

[1] It is conceded that the word translated "just" means literally "righteous," but the form of righteousness intended is so clearly that of justice that the revisers seem to have done well in retaining that word in the text, while they put the other in the margin.

guard well against a snare into which the past has often fallen, that of getting our measures of thinking about God and his ways from man and his ways; and our ideas on a subject of awful majesty, that, namely, of the government of God, from petty instances of government on earth. It is indeed the danger of the petty as distinguished from the large, the mechanical as distinguished from the natural, that we have especially to guard against. When we first invent our own God, and then reason from him, almost any conceivable horror may be the result.

Returning then to our theme, if the remission of sins was the object sought more particularly in the death of Christ, it is plain that the love of justice must have been one of the divine attributes entering deeply into that event. Our Lord believed the great function of the divine judgment at the end of the world to be entrusted into his hands; and this might well be, since judgment unquestionably is one of the attributes of the divine sovereignty. But what would be thought of a judge whose concern for justice should prove, in any particular whatever, deficient? For justice is an interest vast, universal, the safeguard everywhere of the general welfare against the selfishness of individuals, essential to any proper

fulness of life in rational creatures, and even in God himself. Nor is justice in the form of punishment of inferior importance. We must not permit the halo that surrounds the heaven of the redeemed to blind us to the awful splendors of retribution in the form of punishment. We must not forget how much depends, in the kingdom of divine love, on the firmness of the hand that holds the scales. It is not forgiveness that is the pillar of righteous government — it is justice that is the everlasting foundation of right in governments.

We have many means of knowing how well our Lord understood this, and how dear this interest was to his heart. To him the judgment of the future was an exceedingly solemn reality. We cannot think little of a fact that to him was so great. Surely not if our business with him is to see in him "the image of the invisible God," and to be ourselves transformed into that image.

Let us now turn our thoughts to our Lord's death, with the intent to find in it that expression of the love of justice in God which it must have contained, and which we are assured it did contain.

The great central thought of the cross is clearly evident; it is this. In bearing

vicariously in those sacred hours of his passion our self-contempt, our self-reproach, our inward disharmony, our consciousness of the divine displeasure, our remorse at the evil we have done to others, and at having wasted on our lusts the heritage of a child of God, we know that our Lord felt both the shame and the disaster of our sin to the full.

As regards our Lord's feeling of the shame of our sins I ask you to consider it as containing in itself the elements of an absolutely perfect repentance.

President Edwards, in his treatise on *The Divine Satisfaction for Sin*, affirmed that an adequate repentance would be a sufficient reason for the divine forgiveness of sin. Upon the, to us, strange metaphysical ground that man is incapable of exerting such a repentance, since his sins are against an infinite being, and his repentance to be adequate must be infinite —a thing impossible to a finite being—he dismissed the thought. But a Scotch admirer of Edwards, J. McLeod Campbell, seized upon it; and this bore fruit in a book entitled *The Nature of the Atonement*—a book by reason of its thoughtfulness and purity of tone among the most valuable which the century has given us on this subject. The thought advanced by Dr. Campbell, who seems to have taken

for granted the truth of Edwards's remark, was that Christ in his death "made a perfect response in amen to the mind of God in relation to sin." In doing this he rightly "met the wrath" of God against sin, since he exercised in effect for man a perfect repentance; or, to use his own words, he "accorded to justice that which was its due, and could alone satisfy it." It was of course as man's representative that Christ was conceived as having acted—his perfect repentance being accepted as though it were that of the race in whose behalf he acted.

But this view was plainly open to the objection which he himself had urged very strongly against the old orthodox view of the atonement. The old orthodox theory was that Christ's sufferings in dying for men were literally equal in amount to all that the saved would have endured, had they been punished eternally. This theory involved the assumption, sufficient of itself to condemn it, that God may justly punish the sins committed by souls in the very brief and few years of the earthly life by an eternity of suffering (and that, even though these sins should have been abandoned in life's progress). Eternal sin will in the necessity of things incur an eternal retribution of punishment; but what mortal shall dare affirm so awful a seeming

disproportion as that between a very finite period of sinning; in many cases committed by souls placed under most unfavorable circumstances; and an eternity of punishment?

It was not this objection which Campbell urged against the old orthodox theory, but rather, that whatever the magnitude of Christ's sufferings, God could not accept them in place of what they were not, the penal sufferings of guilty men. Campbell easily detected the point of weakness in this scheme, and had much to say regarding "the legal fiction" which such a transaction would involve. He strangely failed to see that equally the repentance of Christ in our behalf, supposing it to have been perfect, cannot serve with God as being our repentance, when in reality it is not.

And yet how gracious a thought of God toward us it is, if our Lord in his death does, as we all most profoundly believe to be the case, perfectly "respond to the feeling of God in relation to sin"; for then he becomes to us at least a perfect pattern of what our repentance to be complete must be. This opens the way, as otherwise it could not be open for us, to satisfy by a true repentance the justice of God; for now, learning from Christ, we also can come "into accordance with the mind of

God in relation to sin"; in other words, we can exercise a true repentance.

This proceeds on the supposition that Edwards was right in his assertion, and that a perfect repentance would be a sufficient satisfaction to divine justice. The matter is one of supreme importance in the study of the atonement; nor can we advance with any assurance whatever upon that pathway, except by a thorough examination of it.

We saw in our study of the law of judgment that there were four principal elements in the punishment—or recoil of the moral law—which the sinner brought upon himself by setting himself against that law. These were:

Remorse.

Inward disharmony (involving doubtless that of the body also).

The displeasure of God.

Exclusion from heaven.

I can think of no possible form of punishment, torture of every kind excepted, that is not included under some one of these four. Let the reader bear in mind that these elements of our punishment are all simply the natural and necessary reaction of sin upon us, as it is to the perfect vision of God. They are what sin naturally does to one who indulges in it—law being what it is and God a being who

rules by law. Of these penalties of sin under natural law, the central one and the one from which the others derive their chief power is the displeasure of God. This would, of course, result in heaven's loss, since heaven is the home of souls in harmony with God. The feeling of God's displeasure would also be at the root of all true remorse for sin. Remorse, it is said, is a feeling little known in the savage races—a thing to be expected, since they have little knowledge of God, and little conception, therefore, of the ideals of right whose home is in the bosom of God. Julius Müller, in his *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, expressed his belief that previous to any complete experience of hell a soul must have seen the life in heaven; and we must suppose this to be in substance true, for it is impossible to think of a soul as knowing the remorse which is so essential an element of its eternal punishment, save as it has come somehow to know the glory of a life conformed to God's perfect righteousness, and the misery by comparison of a life subject to his displeasure. True remorse for sin arises in the soul that sees sin as it is in God's sight, and knows itself to be guilty of it.

The spirit's inward disharmony also, if it be of a nature to destroy its peace, springs from the same source, the feeling of the divine dis-

pleasure; only we are to remember that there may be in any, even the Christian soul, much of variance between faculties not as yet brought into completely harmonious action; as also between that soul and neighbor souls. But these would not suffice to destroy the spirit's peace, if it had a reasonable assurance of the divine forgiveness and substantial approval. This given, the substance of what the soul needs is given.

These things, then, constitute the punishment of sin. Is repentance of a nature to stand with God in their stead? This is the question before us. And the answer is: If truly patterned after the example of Christ on the cross it is, since it is in that case the spirit's becoming conformed to God's thought concerning sin—it is seeing sin as God sees it; it is hating it as he hates it; it is turning from it to live superior to it, as he does. A perfect repentance (*μετάνοια*) would amount even to this. Nor can any one for a moment imagine, if he sees this repentance aright, that it would not satisfy the feeling of justice in God. How can justice require God to be displeased with a soul that in very truth pleases him, since it now thinks his thoughts and is in sympathy with him? This is the one great object that was sought, in man's creation, in the gift of

Christ, and, as I believe, in law itself. It has been accomplished. Can justice demand anything more?

This conclusion is greatly strengthened when we consider the relation which punishment and repentance bear to each other—a relation of the very highest intrinsic importance, but which seems to have been almost wholly left out thus far in the study of the atonement.

Punishment, though to the one who suffers it chiefly a subjective experience, is to the law objective. It is the law's very objective thrust at its own violation. This thrust is disarmed of its power beforehand by repentance. For what is repentance save the soul's preliminary acceptance, by a movement of its own in free will, of this action of the law; acknowledging its justice, and even taking on itself the penalty the law demands? This is the only sufficient explanation of the remorse, the inward disturbance of the faculties, the sense of God's displeasure, and the feeling that heaven is shut against the spirit save as grace opens its doors —which so characterize and constitute a genuine repentance. We have here the very elements of a soul's punishment; only they are borne by its own act, and without the definite thought of their being punishment. If this be so, well may justice be satisfied with the sub-

stitute it receives for the poor sinner's punishment.

But we are brought here to a difficulty of the most serious importance, and which might seem at first sight almost fatal to our newly awakened hopes. It is the difficulty created by the fact that the average of repentance as it actually exists among men is of so inferior a quality; so far, so very far, from being a perfect, or even in many cases to our view a reasonably sincere repentance. What proportion is there of Christians at large, in the world's great aggregate, who seem to have any feeling of sin's evil; or sorrow for their personal transgressions; or conception of the interminable reach to which the consequences of their wrong doing, or neglect of right doing, may extend; or sense of God's displeasure with them because they keep themselves so far from him—at all commensurate with the greatness of their ill-deserving? And yet, as the Christian system is everywhere construed, even such a one may believe that the divine displeasure has been, or will soon be (I use this qualifying term to meet the case of believers in purgatory), changed into good pleasure. He thinks he may believe that he is no longer regarded by God as a sinner, nor as one liable to punishment; he is

counted as a just person, and his sins are forgiven. Doubts may come at times to individuals, and the question arises whether they are justified in counting themselves among God's elect ones. Now and then the feeling of personal ill-desert may get strong hold on one who wakes up to a sense of his condition. But these are exceptions, nor are they apt to be abiding; as a rule they regard their good estate as reasonably secure. Very earnest Christians shudder at this so widely prevalent condition of the church, so plainly does it seem to be a thing outside "the way" that leads to the true life. And yet it is difficult to see how it is possible to escape from very much of this if the gospel is to be indeed good tidings to men generally. For consider that it is not some sinful individual whose need is to be met by such a provision; still less some exceptional individual, the purity of whose repentance is above the average. The gates are to be flung open to a race of beings, and a race many of whom are lying in a great depth of degradation. Absolution is to be offered to all of this race who will repent and believe. Nor, if the hope for man is to be real, can too much account be made of imperfections; for are not men in a very slowly advancing progress from lowest precedent conditions? There can be

but one requirement — that of sincerity. A germ of true life perceptible to God in the spirit of his child must be enough to win his pardon. We notice indeed the provision made in the cross to deepen the sense of repentance. This is of God and full of his wisdom. Because it is of him its power over men must deepen, and the best hope possible for us to cherish regarding the future is that this power in the cross shall deepen and not diminish. But for centuries yet at the least, with the abiding patience of God, and his continual gift of the Holy Spirit, how great will be the deficiency in the faith and repentance of Christians; how exceeding large the deficit due to God's justice even from the saved!

Let us render the respect that is due to sincere believers in the doctrine of purgatory for the effort made by them to overcome this difficulty. We shall not enter into any discussion of that very important doctrine of the ancient and a portion of the modern church; for there is little reason to believe that protestants will be brought over to a view whose supporters have been able to find so little in the bible to found it upon. Whether this doctrine looks forward to a training, after death and under severe discipline, in the grace of true repentance; or whether it contemplates the more

rational solution, that the deficit of punishment due from us all for our life's sins—sins confined in the worst to a few brief years—will in time be made up; it seems equally outside of the bible teaching. The uniform tenor of that teaching seems to be that believers in Christ are washed of their sins, cleansed in the all-precious blood, forgiven of God, and made heirs of life.

But observe that even this does not exclude the thought of a possible completion in us of the holy work of repentance when our life here is ended. Only this will not be done in a world of vast duration, and wholly characterized by suffering, but in a department of the heavenly life itself, where we may believe our lot will be cast previous to the final judgment. Bitterness of spirit in the memory of various follies committed in the earth-life we may suppose there will be, but much of heaven's sweetness with it; tears which a loving hand will wipe away; but the result will be a blessedness in union with God and sympathy with his thoughts, which must needs be brought to pass in us before we can know the fulness of the life that is in God. Are there not many to whom no thought is more dear than that of talking over with the Savior, on some more than usually celestial day, many things about the

earth-life and its sins, and learning from him just what to think about them?

There remains a thought which over my own mind possesses a peculiar power, and which seems to me to be one of the pervasive thoughts of the bible. I have made a most careful examination of the Old and New Testaments in the study of the thought I am speaking of. In the sin offerings of the Old Testament, as interpreted by the sacrifices of the great day of atonement, I find it. I find it in the prophets, I find it in our Lord. In many sayings of the apostles—those especially which presuppose the mystic efficacy of the blood of Christ, in distinction from those which speak simply of his death—I find it again. It answers in my mind to the depth of my conviction that in a very backward race like ours there will surely be vast deficiencies in our payment of what we owe to justice, as well as in the perfection of that repentance which is the only conceivable substitute in nature for punishment. It is the thought that Christ's sympathetic endurance of our penal woes on the cross may have been purposed by God to answer this need, and to stand to justice in lieu of all remaining deficits in our punishment. It is not in any dogmatic spirit that I offer this thought. May there not be truths not

intended to be reduced to dogma? Must God tell everything? Must he put everything in hard and fast lines for us? Is there nothing that can be left for the Christian consciousness to interpret as it varies in different individuals and in the differently unfolding ages? Are there no things whose value lies not so much in their absolute truth as in our being true to ourselves in interpreting them? It is then as a contribution out of my personal feeling regarding values, it is as a testimony to what makes Christ's death mean the most to me, that I offer this thought, which for so many ages and in different forms has been dear to true saints of God.

For to whom of us does not the feeling at least occasionally come, "I deserve ill"? Sometimes it is when sin has confirmed its power over us and wrought some uncommon shame; and possibly when the shame has been exposed, that this feeling takes strong hold of us, "I am ill-deserving." Often it is the precursor of repentance in souls. It means "I deserve punishment." It does not mean I deserve discipline. It does not leave out the element of judgment. That would be very weak. It has in it the thought, the solemn thought of God's displeasure. It is a premonition of the day of judgment. When such hours

come to us, and still more when that great hour itself comes, whose impending future was to our Lord's mind so solemn a reality; then the thought may become the dearest refuge of our souls, "He bore my sins, even in all the woe of their deserved penalty, on the cross." For the thought of punishment and of bearing it to the full is sometimes truer to an awakened spirit than any other—truer until Christ is seen bearing our punishment for us. Then indeed the perfection is seen of grace; and if there be still an undertone of mystery, is it the less divine for that?

In concluding this chapter, and in leaving behind what has been the main thought of the book, I desire to express my profound sense of the need the church has, and its ministers especially, to understand the importance of the second part in the communion between God and us—namely, our sympathy with God in his thoughts. It is so much pleasanter to accept the comfort of God's sympathy with us; it is so soothing to our sense of ease; it leaves us so much freer for the earth-life! But the stimulus of the true life and its blessedness are in the other. Here also is the only sufficient remedy against the encroachment on the Christian world of the spirit of this world. God is the eternal norm of souls. It is when

we begin to be conformed to his Spirit as it is revealed in his Son, our Lord, that we begin to possess a true righteousness, and to have what is not a mere experience of dreamers, but a veritable foretaste of heaven. For did not our Lord himself say in his prayer for us to the Father: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ"?

XVII

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

AMONG the truths made clear by the Incarnate Word is the familiar one, that the final goal appointed for man is in the future world. The pathway ends in heaven; the traveller will arrive at his destination there. The power which this truth had over the early disciples is seen in the importance they gave to the doctrine of the resurrection. Our Lord's death was deprived of its proper significance to them, save as it was associated with the great fact of his rising from the dead. These two belonged together, and the resurrection had the greater place, since, as it involved the rising of the disciples with their Lord, it carried in itself the fulfilment of the end sought in the cross. The reader will recall various sayings of apostles expressive of this truth, of which it will suffice to quote the following from St. Paul: "That like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we also might walk in newness of life. For if we

have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of the resurrection."

Our Lord in the near prospect of his death was pleased to afford the twelve a glimpse of what their future home in heaven was to be. His promise in effect was, that he would receive them into a specially prepared mansion of the Father's house. One of the delightful thoughts suggested by this promise is that when we reach our home we shall possess the constant and immediate sympathy with us of our Lord, together with the opportunity of an ever-increasing sympathy with him. This is to many a thought of some difficulty, since we naturally conceive, and must conceive, of the eternal Word—the being who appropriately claims to be "equal with God"—as forever occupied in caring for the worlds he has been appointed to create; and as unable, therefore, even for a moment, to abdicate his seat beside the Father. Happily, however, it is not this being of whom we hope to have the constant companionship, but of the Word in that form of his manifestation—one doubtless out of a countless multitude—under which he is especially known by us of this world. It will be ours to have the presence, the loving companionship, the divine guidance of the Incarnate

Word. In this we shall find the complete and even distinguished fulfilment of all the possible spiritual desires appropriate to our race. Especially pleasing to true hearts will it be, that we shall have in this Jesus such a medium of communication with the eternal Father. With Jesus as our mediator, what a dignity will be imparted to our position, and what power! Our Lord tells us in one of his great Apocalyptic sayings that his name will be upon our foreheads, and he himself will call us by it. Think, then, how near we shall be in that name, to him, to one another, and even to the great Father of us all! In that day the longing expressed by St. Paul, "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead," will have been fulfilled, then each of us will be able to say, My heart's desire has been accomplished, it has been given me to attain.

The above is a picture of the relation in which individuals come through faith to stand with Christ. But it would be unduly to limit the freeness of salvation to confine these benefits to believers only. A greater thing than this is true, that there exists now in the bosom of our entire humanity, what did not exist before—namely, the potentiality, real in the fullest sense, and embracing every human spirit, of a renewed life with God, and the

possession of all the fruits that grow from it. It is not plain how it could have been possible before Christ for God to make to mankind a universal offer of forgiveness, even on condition of repentance and faith; because the practical possibility of any true spiritual life was lost out of our race as a whole. For though there were individual instances in which this grace doubtless appeared, it was present only in a sporadic way in a chosen person here and there, and in one instance only, and then imperfectly, in a chosen race. What there was of this grace flowed from the Christ-fountain in God, and had Christ by anticipation in it; but the fountain itself was not opened; there was as yet no spring of divine grace, which, existing in humanity, was also central to humanity, and to the whole of it, opening in an available way to every man the possibility of repentance and life. Humanity's condition apart from Christ is the opposite of faith; it is separation from God. In his freedom man has chosen sin, and in so doing has given himself up to the control of a principle that excludes God. It is through the "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," that this condition of our race has been changed; and the reason of this is that in Christ the grace of God became incorporate in humanity itself.

It accords well with the fitness of things that, as we approach our journey's end, this thought should occupy us. In our discussion hitherto the divinity of Christ has been chiefly emphasized. Our principal aim has been following in this the example of the New Testament itself, to see how in Christ God came in the fulness of his divine sympathy into our human lives, thus inviting us to sympathy with him. The thought of our Lord's humanity was never absent from this great truth; it was involved in it rather at every point; but it contributes much to the completeness of our view that it should rise now into a greater prominence.

If we would see how it is that through Christ the condition of grace becomes incorporate in humanity itself, we have first of all to bear in mind that this one alone of our race stands before us as man in the very truth of his being; man accordant with God's pure ideal; the genuine or real man. Christ is without the defect, sin, that impairs alike all the rest of us men. He also alone of us is perfect in his communion with God. Now the very fact of the existence in humanity of such a being as this, supposing him to be "set forth" in such a way as to be an object of observation to all, is of unspeakable value to men; and the reason is that each one of us has in him a pure ideal

of that which he must seek to become in order to attain to the proper fulfilment of himself. The encouragement we have in knowing that one of our number has attained to this perfection of our manhood, if we had nothing more, might seem a sufficient reason for the great Father's bestowment on us of such a gift. But this is very different from the opening of a fountain of divine grace in the bosom of humanity; it is rather the opening of a fountain of human influence, available indeed for God to use, but outside the mind and heart of God. However great a grace from God this might be, it would not be the divine grace itself, the very fountain of that grace, opened in humanity's own bosom. This becomes true when it is given us to see in the Savior, God present with man; and present not in a union of loving fellowship merely, but in such an identity of being that the two constitute one person and are moved by a single will. This is the sacred fact, sacred mystery, if any please so to call it, of the incarnation. It is in a somewhat different sense the other, or obverse side of the incarnation. For the incarnation is rendered possible not merely by the existence in God of a human element, but no less by an element of potential divinity existing in ourselves. If the incarnation is real, it is not

only possible for God to be united with us, but for us to be united with God. The mystery here, in our possible union with God, is farther beyond our power to define than even the mystery of God's union with us. Nor do we seek to penetrate it, nor do we dare to think of it as actually true of any among men, save of Jesus. But for him it is as possible now to become truly a spiritual head of our race as it was for Adam to be our natural head. For he is in truth the God-Man: "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"—that is, made operative and efficient among men, through the bodily forces of the man Jesus. Hence Jesus is clothed, not by delegation from the Almighty, but in himself, with power to impart to all who seek it of him the true life. Thus "the last Adam becomes," as St. Paul calls him, "a life-giving spirit."

If now it be asked in what sense the existence among men of this fountain of grace effects a change in the condition of humanity at large, we can do no better than to study St. Paul's own explanation of the matter. This apostle strikes at once at the very root of the trouble of our race. It is sin that separates the world of men from God; and this is a matter of nature; it is the characteristic and dominant trait of humanity. But this our

organic condition, so full of discouragement, and rendering the prospect of the race in general so doleful, is wholly changed through the death of Christ for us. The apostle explains clearly the manner of the change. "For the love of God constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again." It is death in its ethical significance that is plainly meant in these words. Christ died to sin, that is to the principle of sin, that existed potentially in him as in other men. In his dying all died—not actually to the commission of sin henceforth, for the added clause implies that only a part would become in fact partakers of the spiritual life in Christ—but in the sense that the controlling power of sin in humanity was now broken; it had become fully open now to all to die unto sin. If it be an object to preserve an alliterative force such as is found in the Greek of St. Paul, the meaning of the passage may be expressed by the words: Christ died really to the sin that was potential in him; men died potentially to the sin that was real in them.[1]

[1] De Wette in his commentary on this passage, II. Cor. v., 14, has well expressed the meaning of this saying of the

They died potentially to sin, since now the way to this was open to all. And no less was it open to all to rise from out of this death to sin into "newness of life with Christ"; for the motive "that they live no longer unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again," was now beyond expression powerful.

It is evident how important a place is held by this truth in that unfolding of the way of communion with God which is the subject of this discussion. It is true that the way is only yet a clearly possible way, proved such by the fact that certain ones have climbed the steep; but that possibility is not a mere chance, turning upon unknown factors, and factors that are never likely to come under any real control by those interested; nor is it a chance whose frequency of occurrence is fixed and can be calculated by the mathematical laws of probability, which some assuming have greatly erred. This rather is the truth—that the value to men at large of the opportunity changes as the race moves on toward its maturity; and the

apostle: "Christ died as that one in whom all should have their true, pure life, even as he was the real man (*der Mensch an sich*) or the head of humanity. His death, suffered on sin's account, and for its destruction, was therefore as truly common to humanity as was the pure human life that in him attained to victory and dominion."

tendency of the change is ever toward the increase of the value of the chance.

The testimony of human history during the period which our knowledge covers is proof enough of this. Doubt—that important factor in all soul-progress, whose function is to hinder speed in order to make progress surer; to incite to thought in order that knowledge, emerging from a more careful treatment, may be more pure of dross—doubt, which in our time tests all the old values, has raised the question whether the Abraham of the bible was a real historic character, or whether his record belongs to the age of the world when human knowledge was shrouded in that atmosphere of legend, which, like the earth-born mists that sometimes wrap the morn about, presents objects as much impaired in their distinctness as they are increased in size. But one thing is clear, that human society as pictured in the story of Abraham differs from the reality of that age, if at all, only in picturing it as better than it was, for it is pictured in that story as able to produce an Abraham, which it was not if the Abraham of the bible was not real.

How wonderful, then, the progress made by humanity in the brief interval from that period to this! I say brief, for, measured by the vast cycles of a world-development, a millennium is

indeed a very brief period. It is not time that is of importance in the infinite mind; it is event. Let a million of years go to the preparation of a world; the time is nothing; the issue in a world is all. A thousand years may count at a later day as a million earlier; and even many millenniums may be as nothing to the one day that shall see the crucifixion of the Son of man. Four short millenniums from Abraham's day, four "yesterdays when they are past" to God, with Calvary's noon-tide shining clear in their midst, and how vast the change! At their beginning at the best a single good man who had found his way to God in a world else very dark. At its end an infinitude of life opened in that other one man, who, having made clear to us the way, and opened it to all, converted death into a gateway whereby all may pass upward to the Father's side. It is a wonderful thing that humanity has now that day behind it in its onward progress. The life of God among us in man's appointed Savior and the anointed one has been lived; that stage is passed. "The difficult blue heights" now shine clear, their tops glowing with the tints of eternity's fair morning. Many travellers are climbing the heights, and the door to the way leading upward is wide open. Lo, the holy hands that beckon

downward from above to the climbers; the voices that sing their invitation; one glad face, known to us already, the face of Jesus, shining its welcome; the Father's heart rejoicing in every child whom the love of his "well beloved" has persuaded to come home!

Have we not here at last, completed, the Father's unfolding of the way of life to his children? The older covenant is fulfilled in righteousness. This is made clear in the heavenly songs: "And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest."

But it is not at the cost of life's fulness that righteousness has triumphed; rather in the triumph of righteousness the cause of love and true life is also won. "And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And he saith write, for these words are faithful. And he saith unto me, they are come to pass. I am the

Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son."

Let it be ours to say: "Unto him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto God and his Father, to him be the glory, and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

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